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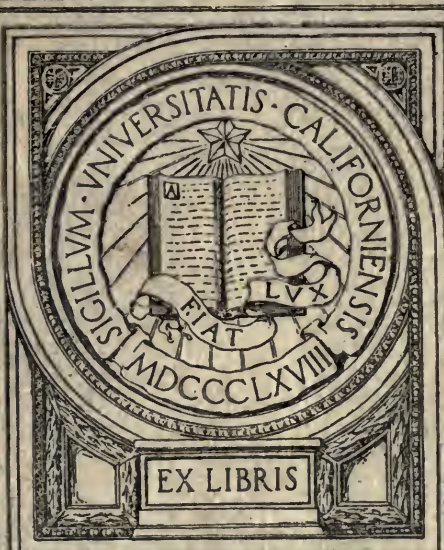

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EDINBURGH EDITION

THE WORKS OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

IN THIRTY VOLUMES

VOL. XXVII

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

II

Novalis.

THOMAS CARLYLE

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME II

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NOVALIS[1]

[1829]

A NUMBER of years ago, Jean Paul's copy of *Novalis* led him to infer that the German reading-world was of a quick disposition; inasmuch as, with respect to books that required more than one perusal, it declined perusing them at all. Paul's *Novalis*, we suppose, was of the first Edition, uncut, dusty, and lent him from the Public Library with willingness, nay, with joy. But times, it would appear, must be considerably changed since then; indeed, were we to judge of German reading habits from these Volumes of ours, we should draw quite a different conclusion from Paul's; for they are of the fourth Edition, perhaps therefore the ten-thousandth copy, and that of a Book demanding, whether deserving or not, to be oftener read than almost any other it has ever been our lot to examine.

Without at all entering into the merits of Novalis, we may observe that we should reckon it a happy sign of Literature, were so solid a fashion of study here and there established in all countries: for directly in the teeth of most 'intellectual tea-circles,' it may be asserted that no good Book, or good thing of any sort, shows its best face at first; nay, that the commonest quality in a true work of Art, if its excellence have any depth and compass, is that at first sight it occasions a certain disappointment; perhaps even, mingled with its undeniable beauty, a certain feeling of aversion. Not as if we

[1] FOREIGN REVIEW, No. 7.—*Novalis Schriften. Herausgegeben von Ludwig Tieck und Friedrich Schlegel* (Novalis' Writings. Edited by Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel). Fourth Edition. 2 vols. Berlin, 1826.

meant, by this remark, to cast a stone at the old guild of literary Improvisators, or any of that diligent brotherhood, whose trade it is to blow soap-bubbles for their fellow-creatures; which bubbles, of course, if they are not seen and admired this moment, will be altogether lost to men's eyes the next. Considering the use of these blowers, in civilised communities, we rather wish them strong lungs, and all manner of prosperity: but simply we would contend that such soap-bubble guild should not become the sole one in Literature; that being undisputably the strongest, it should content itself with this preëminence, and not tyrannically annihilate its less prosperous neighbours. For it should be recollected that Literature positively has other aims than this of amusement from hour to hour; nay, perhaps that this, glorious as it may be, is not its highest or true aim. We do say, therefore, that the Improvisator corporation should be kept within limits; and readers, at least a certain small class of readers, should understand that some few departments of human inquiry have still their depths and difficulties; that the abstruse is not precisely synonymous with the absurd; nay, that light itself may be darkness, in a certain state of the eyesight; that, in short, cases may occur when a little patience and some attempt at thought would not be altogether superfluous in reading. Let the mob of gentlemen keep their own ground, and be happy and applauded there: if they overstep that ground, they indeed may flourish the better for it, but the reader will suffer damage. For in this way, a reader, accustomed to see through everything in one second of time, comes to forget that his wisdom and critical penetration are finite and not infinite; and so commits more than one mistake in his conclusions. The Reviewer too, who indeed is only a preparatory reader, as it were a sort of sieve and drainer for the use of more luxurious readers, soon follows his example: these two react still farther on the mob of gentlemen; and so among them all, with this action and reaction, matters grow worse and worse.

It rather seems to us as if, in this respect of faithfulness in reading, the Germans were somewhat ahead of us English; at least we have no such proof to show of it as that fourth Edition of *Novalis*. Our Coleridge's *Friend*, for example, and *Biographia Literaria* are but a slight business compared with these *Schriften*; little more than the Alphabet, and that in gilt letters, of such Philosophy and Art as is here taught in the form of Grammar and Rhetorical Compend; yet Coleridge's works were triumphantly condemned by the whole reviewing world, as clearly unintelligible; and among readers they have still but an unseen circulation; like living brooks, hidden for the present under mountains of froth and theatrical snow-paper, and which only at a distant day, when these mountains shall have decomposed themselves into gas and earthy residuum, may roll forth in their true limpid shape, to gladden the general eye with what beauty and everlasting freshness does reside in them. It is admitted too, on all hands, that Mr. Coleridge is a man of 'genius,' that is, a man having more intellectual insight than other men; and strangely enough, it is taken for granted, at the same time, that he has less intellectual insight than any other. For why else are his doctrines to be thrown out of doors, without examination, as false and worthless, simply because they are obscure? Or how is their so palpable falsehood to be accounted for to our minds, except on this extraordinary ground: that a man able to originate deep thoughts (such is the meaning of genius) is unable to *see* them when originated; that the creative intellect of a Philosopher is destitute of that mere faculty of logic which belongs to 'all Attorneys, and men educated in Edinburgh'? The Cambridge carrier, when asked whether his horse could "draw inferences," readily replied, "Yes, anything in reason"; but here, it seems, is a man of genius who has no similar gift.

We ourselves, we confess, are too young in the study of human nature to have met with any such anomaly. Never yet has it beer our fortune to fall in with any man of genius

whose conclusions did not correspond better with his premises, and not worse, than those of other men; whose genius, when it once came to be understood, did not manifest itself in a deeper, fuller, truer view of all things human and divine, than the clearest of your so laudable 'practical men' had claim to. Such, we say, has been our uniform experience; so uniform, that we now hardly ever expect to see it contradicted. True it is, the old Pythagorean argument of 'the master said it,' has long since ceased to be available: in these days, no man, except the Pope of Rome, is altogether exempt from error of judgment; doubtless a man of genius may chance to adopt false opinions; nay, rather, like all other sons of Adam, except that same enviable Pope, *must* occasionally adopt such. Nevertheless, we reckon it a good maxim, That no error is fully confuted till we have seen not only *that* it is an error, but how it became one; till finding that it clashes with the principles of truth established in our own mind, we find also in what way it had seemed to harmonise with the principles of truth established in that other mind, perhaps so unspeakably superior to ours. Treated by this method, it still appears to us, according to the old saying, that the errors of a wise man are literally more instructive than the truths of a fool. For the wise man travels in lofty, far-seeing regions; the fool, in low-lying, high-fenced lanes: retracing the footsteps of the former, to discover where he deviated, whole provinces of the Universe are laid open to us; in the path of the latter, granting even that he have not deviated at all, little is laid open to us but two wheel-ruts and two hedges.

On these grounds we reckon it more profitable, in almost any case, to have to do with men of depth than with men of shallowness: and were it possible, we would read no book that was not written by one of the former class; all members of which we would love and venerate, how perverse soever they might seem to us at first; nay, though, after the fullest investigation, we still found many things to pardon in them.

Such of our readers as at all participate in this predilection will not blame us for bringing them acquainted with Novalis, a man of the most indisputable talent, poetical and philosophical; whose opinions, extraordinary, nay, altogether wild and baseless as they often appear, are not without a strict coherence in his own mind, and will lead any other mind, that examines them faithfully, into endless considerations; opening the strangest inquiries, new truths, or new possibilities of truth, a whole unexpected world of thought, where, whether for belief or denial, the deepest questions await us.

In what is called reviewing such a book as this, we are aware that to the judicious craftsman two methods present themselves. The first and most convenient is, for the Reviewer to perch himself resolutely, as it were, on the shoulder of his Author, and therefrom to show as if he commanded him and looked down on him by natural superiority of stature. Whatsoever the great man says or does, the little man shall treat with an air of knowingness and light condescending mockery; professing, with much covert sarcasm, that this and that other is beyond *his* comprehension, and cunningly asking his readers if they comprehend it! Herein it will help him mightily, if, besides description, he can quote a few passages, which, in their detached state, and taken most probably in quite a wrong acceptation of the words, shall sound strange, and, to certain hearers, even absurd; all which will be easy enough, if he have any handiness in the business, and address the right audience; truths, as this world goes, being true only for those that have *some* understanding of them; as, for instance, in the Yorkshire Wolds, and Thames Coal-ships, Christian men enough might be found, at this day, who, if you read them the Thirty-ninth of the *Principia*, would 'grin intelligence from ear to ear.' On the other hand, should our Reviewer meet with any passage, the wisdom of which, deep, plain and palpable to the simplest, might cause misgivings in the reader, as if here were a man of half-unknown endowment, whom perhaps it were better to wonder at than laugh at, our

Reviewer either suppresses it, or citing it with an air of meritorious candour, calls upon his Author, in a tone of command and encouragement, to lay aside his transcendental crotchets, and write always thus, and *he* will admire him. Whereby the reader again feels comforted; proceeds swimmingly to the conclusion of the 'Article,' and shuts it with a victorious feeling, not only that he and the Reviewer understand this man, but also that, with some rays of fancy and the like, the man is little better than a living mass of darkness.

In this way does the small Reviewer triumph over great Authors; but it is the triumph of a fool. In this way too does he recommend himself to certain readers, but it is the recommendation of a parasite, and of no true servant. The servant would have spoken truth, in this case; truth, that it might have profited, however harsh: the parasite glozes his master with sweet speeches, that he may filch applause, and certain 'guineas per shet,' from him; substituting for ignorance which was harmless, error which is not so. And yet to the vulgar reader, naturally enough, that flattering unction is full of solacement. In fact, to a reader of this sort few things can be more alarming than to find that his own little Parish, where he lived so snug and absolute, is, after all, *not* the whole Universe; that beyond the hill which screened his house from the east wind, and grew his kitchen-vegetables so sweetly, there are other hills and other hamlets, nay, mountains and towered cities; with all which, if he would continue to pass for a geographer, he must forthwith make himself acquainted. Now this Reviewer, often his fellow Parishioner, is a safe man; leads him pleasantly to the hill-top; shows him that indeed there are, or seem to be, other expanses, these too of boundless extent: but with only cloud mountains, and *fatamorgana* cities; the true character of that region being Vacuity, or at best a stony desert tenanted by Gryphons and Chimeras.

Surely, if printing is not, like courtier speech, 'the art of *concealing* thought,' all this must be blamable enough. Is it

the Reviewer's real trade to be a pander of laziness, self-conceit and all manner of contemptuous stupidity on the part of his reader; carefully ministering to these propensities; carefully fencing-off whatever might invade that fool's-paradise with news of disturbance? Is he the priest of Literature and Philosophy, to interpret their mysteries to the common man; as a faithful preacher, teaching him to understand what is adapted for his understanding, to reverence what is adapted for higher understandings than his? Or merely the lackey of Dulness, striving for certain wages, of pudding or praise, by the month or quarter, to perpetuate the reign of presumption and triviality on earth? If the latter, will he not be counselled to pause for an instant, and reflect seriously, whether starvation were worse or were better than such a dog's-existence?

Our reader perceives that we are for adopting the second method with regard to Novalis; that we wish less to insult over this highly-gifted man, than to gain some insight into him; that we look upon his mode of being and thinking as very singular, but not therefore necessarily very contemptible; as a matter, in fact, worthy of examination, and difficult beyond most others to examine wisely and with profit. Let no man expect that, in this case, a Samson is to be led forth, blinded and manacled, to make him sport. Nay, might it not, in a spiritual sense, be death, as surely it would be damage, to the small man himself? For is not this habit of sneering at all greatness, of forcibly bringing down all greatness to his own height, one chief cause which keeps that height so very inconsiderable? Come of it what may, we have no refreshing dew for the small man's vanity in this place; nay, rather, as charitable brethren, and fellow-sufferers from that same evil, we would gladly lay the sickle to that reed-grove of self-conceit, which has grown round him, and reap it altogether away, that so the true figure of the world, and his own true figure, might no longer be utterly hidden from him. Does this our brother, then, refuse to accompany

us, without such allurements? He must even retain our best wishes, and abide by his own hearth.

Farther, to the honest few who still go along with us on this occasion, we are bound in justice to say that, far from looking down on Novalis, we cannot place either them or ourselves on a level with him. To explain so strange an individuality, to exhibit a mind of this depth and singularity before the minds of readers so foreign to him in every sense, would be a vain pretension in us. With the best will, and after repeated trials, we have gained but a feeble notion of Novalis for ourselves: his Volumes come before us with every disadvantage; they are the posthumous works of a man cut off in early life, while his opinions, far from being matured for the public eye, were still lying crude and disjointed before his own; for most part written down in the shape of detached aphorisms, 'none of them,' as he says himself, 'untrue or unimportant to his own mind,' but naturally requiring to be remodelled, expanded, compressed, as the matter cleared up more and more into logical unity; at best but fragments of a great scheme which he did not live to realise. If his Editors, Friedrich Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, declined commenting on these Writings, we may well be excused for declining to do so. 'It cannot be our purpose here,' says Tieck, 'to recommend the following Works, or to judge them; probable as it must be that any judgment delivered at this stage of the matter would be a premature and unripe one: for a spirit of such originality must first be comprehended, his will understood, and his loving intention felt and replied to; so that not till his ideas have taken root in other minds, and brought forth new ideas, shall we see rightly, from the historical sequence, what place he himself occupied, and what relation to his country he truly bore.'

Meanwhile, Novalis is a figure of such importance in German Literature, that no student of it can pass him by without attention. If we must not attempt interpreting this Work for our readers, we are bound at least to point out its exist-

ence, and according to our best knowledge direct such of them as take an interest in the matter how to investigate it farther for their own benefit. For this purpose, it may be well that we leave our Author to speak chiefly for himself; subjoining only such expositions as cannot be dispensed with for even verbal intelligibility, and as we can offer on our own surety with some degree of confidence. By way of basis to the whole inquiry, we prefix some particulars of his short life; a part of our task which Tieck's clear and graceful Narrative, given as 'Preface to the Third Edition,' renders easy for us.

Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known in Literature by the pseudonym 'Novalis,' was born on the 2nd of May 1772, at a country residence of his family in the Grafschaft of Mansfeld, in Saxony. His father, who had been a soldier in youth, and still retained a liking for that profession, was at this time Director of the Saxon Salt-works; an office of some considerable trust and dignity. Tieck says, 'he was a vigorous, unweariedly active man, of open, resolute character, a true German. His religious feelings made him a member of the Herrnhut Communion; yet his disposition continued gay, frank, rugged and downright.' The mother also was distinguished for her worth; 'a pattern of noble piety and Christian mildness'; virtues which her subsequent life gave opportunity enough for exercising.

On the young Friedrich, whom we may continue to call Novalis, the qualities of his parents must have exercised more than usual influence; for he was brought up in the most retired manner, with scarcely any associate but a sister one year older than himself, and the two brothers that were next to him in age. A decidedly religious temper seems to have infused itself, under many benignant aspects, over the whole family: in Novalis especially it continued the ruling principle through life; manifested no less in his scientific speculations than in his feelings and conduct. In childhood he is said to

have been remarkable chiefly for the entire, enthusiastic affection with which he loved his mother; and for a certain still, secluded disposition, such that he took no pleasure in boyish sports, and rather shunned the society of other children. Tieck mentions that, till his ninth year, he was reckoned nowise quick of apprehension; but at this period, strangely enough, some violent biliary disease, which had almost cut him off, seemed to awaken his faculties into proper life, and he became the readiest, eagerest learner in all branches of his scholarship.

In his eighteenth year, after a few months of preparation in some *Gymnasium*, the only instruction he appears to have received in any public school, he repaired to Jena; and continued there for three years; after which he spent one season in the Leipzig University, and another, 'to complete his studies,' in that of Wittenberg. It seems to have been at Jena that he became acquainted with Friedrich Schlegel; where also, we suppose, he studied under Fichte. For both of these men he conceived a high admiration and affection; and both of them had, clearly enough, 'a great and abiding effect on his whole life.' Fichte, in particular, whose lofty eloquence and clear calm enthusiasm are said to have made him irresistible as a teacher,[1] had quite gained Novalis to his doctrines; indeed the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which, as we are told of the latter, 'he studied with unwearied zeal,' appears to have been the groundwork of all his future speculations in Philosophy. Besides these metaphysical inquiries, and the usual attainments in classical literature, Novalis seems 'to have devoted himself with ardour to the Physical Sciences, and to Mathematics the basis of them': at an early period of his life he had read much of History 'with extraordinary eagerness'; Poems had from of old been 'the delight of his

[1] Schelling, we have been informed, gives account of Fichte and his *Wissenschaftslehre* to the following effect: 'The Philosophy of Fichte was like lightning; it appeared only for a moment, but it kindled a fire which will burn forever.'

leisure'; particularly that species denominated *Mährchen* (Traditionary Tale), which continued a favourite with him to the last, as almost from infancy it had been a chosen amusement of his to read these compositions, and even to recite such, of his own invention. One remarkable piece of that sort he has himself left us, inserted in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, his chief literary performance.

But the time had now arrived when study must become subordinate to action, and what is called a profession be fixed upon. At the breaking-out of the French War, Novalis had been seized with a strong and altogether unexpected taste for a military life: however, the arguments and pressing entreaties of his friends ultimately prevailed over this whim; it seems to have been settled that he should follow his father's line of occupation; and so, about the end of 1794, he removed to Arnstadt in Thuringia, 'to train himself in practical affairs under the Kreis-Amtmann Just.' In this *Kreis-Amtmann* (Manager of a Circle) he found a wise and kind friend; applied himself honestly to business; and in all his serious calculations may have looked forward to a life as smooth and commonplace as his past years had been. One incident, and that too of no unusual sort, appears, in Tieck's opinion, to have altered the whole form of his existence.

'It was not very long after his arrival at Arnstadt, when in a country mansion of the neighbourhood, he became acquainted with Sophie von K——. The first glance of this fair and wonderfully lovely form was decisive for his whole life; nay, we may say that the feeling, which now penetrated and inspired him, was the substance and essence of his whole life. Sometimes, in the look and figure of a child, there will stamp itself an expression, which, as it is too angelic and ethereally beautiful, we are forced to call unearthly or celestial; and commonly, at sight of such purified and almost transparent faces, there comes on us a fear that they are too tender and delicately fashioned for this life; that it is Death, or Immortality, which looks forth so expressively on us from these glancing eyes; and too often a quick decay converts our mournful foreboding into certainty. Still more affecting are such figures when their first period is happily passed over, and they come before us bloom-

ing on the eve of maidhood. All persons that have known this wondrous loved one of our Friend, agree in testifying that no description can express in what grace and celestial harmony the fair being moved, what beauty shone in her, what softness and majesty encircled her. Novalis became a poet every time he chanced to speak of it. She had concluded her thirteenth year when he first saw her: the spring and summer of 1795 were the blooming time of his life; every hour that he could spare from business he spent in Grüningen: and in the fall of that same year he obtained the wished-for promise from Sophie's parents.'

Unhappily, however, these halcyon days were of too short continuance. Soon after this, Sophie fell dangerously sick 'of a fever, attended with pains in the side'; and her lover had the worst consequences to fear. By and by, indeed, the fever left her; but not the pain, 'which by its violence still spoiled for her many a fair hour,' and gave rise to various apprehensions, though the Physician asserted that it was of no importance. Partly satisfied with this favourable prognostication, Novalis had gone to Weissenfels, to his parents; and was full of business; being now appointed Auditor in the department of which his father was Director: through winter the news from Grüningen were of a favourable sort; in spring he visited the family himself, and found his Sophie to all appearance well. But suddenly, in summer, his hopes and occupations were interrupted by tidings that 'she was in Jena, and had undergone a surgical operation.' Her disease was an abscess in the liver: it had been her wish that he should not hear of her danger till the worst were over. The Jena Surgeon gave hopes of recovery, though a slow one; but ere long the operation had to be repeated, and now it was feared that his patient's strength was too far exhausted. The young maiden bore all this with inflexible courage and the cheerfulest resignation: her Mother and Sister, Novalis, with his Parents and two of his Brothers, all deeply interested in the event, did their utmost to comfort her. In December, by her own wish, she returned home; but it was evident that she grew weaker and weaker. Novalis went and came between Grüningen and Weissenfels, where also he found a house of

mourning; for Erasmus, one of these two Brothers, had long been sickly, and was now believed to be dying.

'The 17th of March,' says Tieck, 'was the fifteenth birthday of his Sophie; and on the 19th, about noon, she departed. No one durst tell Novalis these tidings; at last his Brother Carl undertook it. The poor youth shut himself up, and after three days and three nights of weeping, set out for Arnstadt, that there, with his true friend, he might be near the spot, which now hid the remains of what was dearest to him. On the 14th of April, his Brother Erasmus also left this world. Novalis wrote to inform his Brother Carl of the event, who had been obliged to make a journey into Lower Saxony: "Be of good courage," said he, "Erasmus has prevailed; the flowers of our fair garland are dropping off Here, one by one, that they may be united Yonder, lovelier and forever."'

Among the papers published in these Volumes are three letters, written about this time, which mournfully indicate the author's mood. 'It has grown Evening around me,' says he, 'while I was looking into the red of Morning. My grief is boundless as my love. For three years she has been my hourly thought. She alone bound me to life, to the country, to my occupations. With her I am parted from all; for now I scarcely have *myself* any more. But it has grown Evening; and I feel as if I had to travel early; and so I would fain be at rest, and see nothing but kind faces about me;—all in her spirit would I live, be soft and mild-hearted as she was.' And again, some weeks later: 'I live over the old, bygone life here, in still meditation. Yesterday I was twenty-five years old. I was in Grüningen, and stood beside her grave. It is a friendly spot; enclosed with simple white railing; lies apart, and high. There is still room in it. The village, with its blooming gardens, leans up round the hill; and at this point and that the eye loses itself in blue distances, I know you would have liked to stand by me, and stick the flowers, my birthday gifts, one by one into her hillock. This time two years, she made me a gay present, with a flag and national cockade on it. Today her parents gave me the little things which she, still joyfully, had received

on her last birthday. Friend,—it continues Evening, and will soon be Night. If you go away, think of me kindly, and visit, when you return, the still house, where your Friend rests forever, with the ashes of his beloved. Fare you well!' —Nevertheless, a singular composure came over him; from the very depths of his grief arose a peace and pure joy, such as till then he had never known.

'In this season,' observes Tieck, 'Novalis lived only to his sorrow: it was natural for him to regard the visible and the invisible world as one; and to distinguish Life and Death only by his longing for the latter. At the same time too, Life became for him a glorified Life; and his whole being melted away as into a bright, conscious vision of a higher Existence. From the sacredness of Sorrow, from heartfelt love and the pious wish for death, his temper and all his conceptions are to be explained: and it seems possible that this time, with its deep griefs, planted in him the germ of death, if it was not, in any case, his appointed lot to be so soon snatched away from us.

'He remained many weeks in Thuringia; and came back comforted and truly purified, to his engagements; which he pursued more zealously than ever, though he now regarded himself as a stranger on the earth. In this period, some earlier, many later, especially in the Autumn of this year, occur most of those compositions, which, in the way of extract and selection, we have here given to the Public, under the title of *Fragments*; so likewise the *Hymns to the Night*.'

Such is our Biographer's account of this matter, and of the weighty inference it has led him to. We have detailed it the more minutely, and almost in the very words of the text, the better to put our readers in a condition for judging on what grounds Tieck rests his opinion, That herein lies the key to the whole spiritual history of Novalis, that 'the feeling which now penetrated and inspired him may be said to have been the substance of his Life.' It would ill become us to contradict one so well qualified to judge of all subjects, and who enjoyed such peculiar opportunities for forming a right judgment of this: meanwhile we may say that, to our own minds, after all consideration, the certainty of this hypothesis will nowise become clear. Or rather, perhaps, it is to the expression, to the too determinate and exclusive language in

which the hypothesis is worded, that we should object; for so plain does the truth of the case seem to us, we cannot but believe that Tieck himself would consent to modify his statement. That the whole philosophical and moral existence of such a man as Novalis should have been shaped and determined by the death of a young girl, almost a child, specially distinguished, so far as is shown, by nothing save her beauty, which at any rate must have been very short-lived,—will doubtless seem to every one a singular concatenation. We cannot but think that some result precisely similar in moral effect might have been attained by many different means; nay, that by one means or another, it would not have failed to be attained. For spirits like Novalis, earthly fortune is in no instance so sweet and smooth, that it does not by and by teach the great doctrine of *Entsagen*, of 'Renunciation,' by which alone, as a wise man well known to Herr Tieck has observed, 'can the real entrance on Life be properly said to begin.' Experience, the grand Schoolmaster, seems to have taught Novalis this doctrine very early, by the wreck of his first passionate wish; and herein lies the real influence of Sophie von K. on his character; an influence which, as we imagine, many other things might and would have equally exerted: for it is less the severity of the Teacher than the aptness of the Pupil that secures the lesson; nor do the purifying effects of frustrated Hope, and Affection which in this world will ever be homeless, depend on the worth or loveliness of its objects, but on that of the heart which cherished it, and can draw mild wisdom from so stern a disappointment. We do not say that Novalis continued the same as if this young maiden had not been; causes and effects connecting every man and thing with every other extend through all Time and Space; but surely it appears unjust to represent him as so altogether pliant in the hands of Accident; a mere pipe for Fortune to play tunes on; and which sounded a mystic, deep, almost unearthly melody, simply because a young woman was beautiful and mortal.

We feel the more justified in these hard-hearted and so unromantic strictures, on reading the very next paragraph of Tieck's Narrative. Directly on the back of this occurrence, Novalis goes to Freyberg; and there in 1798, it may be therefore somewhat more or somewhat less than a year after the death of his first love, forms an acquaintance, and an engagement to marry, with a 'Julie von Ch——'! Indeed, ever afterwards, to the end, his life appears to have been more than usually cheerful and happy. Tieck knows not well what to say of this betrothment, which in the eyes of most Novelreaders will have so shocking an appearance: he admits that 'perhaps to any but his intimate friends it may seem singular'; asserts, notwithstanding, that 'Sophie, as may be seen also in his writings, continued the centre of his thoughts; nay, as one departed, she stood in higher reverence with him than when visible and near'; and hurrying on, almost as over an unsafe subject, declares that Novalis felt nevertheless 'as if loveliness of mind and person might, in some measure, replace his loss'; and so leaves us to our own reflections on the matter. We consider it as throwing light on the above criticism; and greatly restricting our acceptance of Tieck's theory.

Yet perhaps, after all, it is only in a Minerva-Press Novel, or to the more tender Imagination, that such a proceeding would seem very blamable. Constancy, in its true sense, may be called the root of all excellence; especially excellent is constancy in active well-doing, in friendly helpfulness to those that love us, and to those that hate us: but constancy in passive suffering, again, in spite of the high value put upon it in Circulating Libraries, is a distinctly inferior virtue, rather an accident than a virtue, and at all events is of extreme rarity in this world. To Novalis, his Sophie might still be as a saintly presence, mournful and unspeakably mild, to be worshipped in the inmost shrine of his memory: but worship of this sort is not man's sole business; neither should we censure Novalis that he dries his tears, and once more

looks abroad with hope on the earth, which is still, as it was before, the strangest complex of mystery and light, of joy as well as sorrow. 'Life belongs to the living; and he that lives must be prepared for vicissitudes.' The questionable circumstance with Novalis is his perhaps too great rapidity in that second courtship; a fault or misfortune the more to be regretted, as this marriage also was to remain a project, and only the anticipation of it to be enjoyed by him.

It was for the purpose of studying mineralogy, under the famous Werner, that Novalis had gone to Freyberg. For this science he had great fondness, as indeed for all the physical sciences; which, if we may judge from his writings, he seems to have prosecuted on a great and original principle, very different both from that of our idle theorisers and generalisers, and that of the still more melancholy class who merely 'collect facts,' and for the torpor or total extinction of the thinking faculty, strive to make up by the more assiduous use of the blowpipe and goniometer. The commencement of a work, entitled the *Disciples at Sais*, intended, as Tieck informs us, to be a 'Physical Romance,' was written in Freyberg, at this time: but it lay unfinished, unprosecuted; and now comes before us as a very mysterious fragment, disclosing scientific depths, which we have not light to see into, much less means to fathom and accurately measure. The various hypothetic views of 'Nature,' that is, of the visible Creation, which are here given out in the words of the several 'Pupils,' differ, almost all of them, more or less, from any that we have ever elsewhere met with. To this work we shall have occasion to refer more particularly in the sequel.

The acquaintance which Novalis formed, soon after this, with the elder Schlegel (August Wilhelm), and still more that of Tieck, whom also he first met in Jena, seems to have operated a considerable diversion in his line of study. Tieck and the Schlegels, with some less active associates, among

whom are now mentioned Wackenroder and Novalis, were at this time engaged in their far-famed campaign against Dunce-dom, or what called itself the 'Old School' of Literature; which old and rather despicable 'School' they had already, both by regular and guerrilla warfare, reduced to great straits; as ultimately, they are reckoned to have succeeded in utterly extirpating it, or at least driving it back to the very confines of its native Cimmeria.[1] It seems to have been in connexion with these men, that Novalis first came before the world as a writer: certain of his *Fragments* under the title of *Blüthen-staub* (Pollen of Flowers), his *Hymns to the Night*, and various poetical compositions, were sent forth in F. Schlegel's *Musen-Almanach* and other periodicals under the same or kindred management. Novalis himself seems to profess that it was Tieck's influence which chiefly 'reawakened Poetry in him.' As to what reception these pieces met with, we have no information: however, Novalis seems to have been ardent and diligent in his new pursuit, as in his old ones; and no less happy than diligent.

'In the summer of 1800,' says Tieck, 'I saw him for the first time, while visiting my friend Wilhelm Schlegel; and our acquaintance soon became the most confidential friendship. They were bright days those, which we passed with Schlegel, Schelling and some other friends. On my return homewards, I visited him in his house, and made acquaintance with his family. Here he read me the *Disciples at Sais*, and many of his *Fragments*. He escorted me as far as Halle; and we enjoyed in Giebichenstein, in the Riechardts' house, some other delightful hours. About this time, the first thought of his *Ofterdingen* had occurred. At an earlier period, certain of his *Spiritual Songs* had been composed: they were to form part of a Christian Hymnbook, which he meant to accompany with a collection of Sermons. For the rest, he was very diligent in his professional labours; whatever he did was done with the heart; the smallest concern was not insignificant to him.'

The professional labours here alluded to, seem to have left much leisure on his hands; room for frequent change of place, and even of residence. Not long afterwards, we find

[1] See *German Romance* (Cent. Ed.), vol. i. p. 260.

him 'living for a long while in a solitary spot of the Güldne Aue in Thuringia, at the foot of the Kyffhäuser Mountain'; his chief society two military men, subsequently Generals; 'in which solitude great part of his *Ofterdingen* was written.' The first volume of this *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, a sort of Art-Romance, intended, as he himself said, to be an 'Apotheosis of Poetry,' was erelong published; under what circumstances, or with what result, we have, as before, no notice. Tieck had for some time been resident in Jena, and at intervals saw much of Novalis. On preparing to quit that abode, he went to pay him a farewell visit at Weissenfels; found him 'somewhat paler,' but full of gladness and hope; 'quite inspired with plans of his future happiness; his house was already fitted up; in a few months he was to be wedded: no less zealously did he speak of the speedy conclusion of *Ofterdingen*, and other books; his life seemed expanding in the richest activity and love.' This was in 1800: four years ago Novalis had longed and looked for death, and it was not appointed him; now life is again rich and far-extending in his eyes, and its close is at hand. Tieck parted with him, and it proved to be forever.

In the month of August, Novalis, preparing for his journey to Freyberg on so joyful an occasion, was alarmed with an appearance of blood proceeding from the lungs. The Physician treated it as a slight matter; nevertheless, the marriage was postponed. He went to Dresden with his Parents, for medical advice; abode there for some time in no improving state; on learning the accidental death of a young brother at home, he ruptured a blood-vessel; and the Doctor then declared his malady incurable. This, as usual in such maladies, was nowise the patient's own opinion; he wished to try a warmer climate, but was thought too weak for the journey. In January (1801) he returned home, visibly, to all but himself, in rapid decline. His bride had already been to see him, in Dresden. We may give the rest in Tieck's words:

'The nearer he approached his end, the more confidently did he expect a speedy recovery; for the cough diminished, and excepting languor, he had no feeling of sickness. With the hope and the longing for life, new talent and fresh strength seemed also to awaken in him; he thought, with renewed love, of all his projected labours; he determined on writing *Ofterdingen* over again from the very beginning; and shortly before his death, he said on one occasion, "Never till now did I know what Poetry was; innumerable Songs and Poems, and of quite different stamp from any of my former ones, have arisen in me." From the nineteenth of March, the death-day of his Sophie, he became visibly weaker; many of his friends visited him; and he felt great joy when, on the twenty-first, his true and oldest friend, Friedrich Schlegel, came to him from Jena. With him he conversed at great length; especially upon their several literary operations. During these days he was very lively; his nights too were quiet; and he enjoyed pretty sound sleep. On the twenty-fifth, about six in the morning, he made his brother hand him certain books, that he might look for something; then he ordered breakfast, and talked cheerfully till eight; towards nine he bade his brother play a little to him on the harpsichord, and in the course of the music fell asleep. Friedrich Schlegel soon afterwards came into the room, and found him quietly sleeping: this sleep lasted till near twelve, when without the smallest motion he passed away, and, unchanged in death, retained his common friendly look as if he yet lived.

'So died,' continues the affectionate Biographer, 'before he had completed his twenty-ninth year, this our Friend; in whom his extensive acquirements, his philosophical talent and his poetic genius must alike obtain our love and admiration. As he had so far outrun his time, our country might have expected extraordinary things from such gifts, had this early death not overtaken him: as it is, the unfinished Writings he left behind him have already had a wide influence; and many of his great thoughts will yet, in time coming, lend their inspiration, and noble minds and deep thinkers will be enlightened and enkindled by the sparks of his genius.

'Novalis was tall, slender and of noble proportions. He wore his light-brown hair in long clustering locks, which at that time was less unusual than it would be now; his hazel eye was clear and glancing; and the colour of his face, especially of the fine brow, almost transparent. Hand and foot were somewhat too large, and without fine character. His look was at all times cheerful and kind. For those who distinguish a man only in so far as he puts himself forward, or by studious breeding, by fashionable bearing, endeavours to shine or to be singular, Novalis was lost in the crowd: to the more practised eye, again, he presented a figure which might be called beautiful. In outline and expression his face strikingly resembled that of the Evangelist John, as we see him in

the large noble Painting by Albrecht Dürer, preserved at Nürnberg and München.

'In speaking, he was lively and loud, his gestures strong. I never saw him tired: though we had talked till far in the night, it was still only on purpose that he stopped, for the sake of rest, and even then he used to read before sleeping. Tedium he never felt, even in oppressive company, among mediocre men; for he was sure to find out one or other, who could give him yet some new piece of knowledge, such as he could turn to use, insignificant as it might seem. His kindliness, his frank bearing, made him a universal favourite: his skill in the art of social intercourse was so great, that smaller minds did not perceive how high he stood above them. Though in conversation he delighted most to unfold the deeps of the soul, and spoke as inspired of the regions of invisible worlds, yet was he mirthful as a child; would jest in free artless gaiety, and heartily give-in to the jestings of his company. Without vanity, without learned haughtiness, far from every affectation and hypocrisy, he was a genuine, true man, the purest and loveliest embodiment of a high immortal spirit.'

So much for the outward figure and history of Novalis. Respecting his inward structure and significance, which our readers are here principally interested to understand, we have already acknowledged that we had no complete insight to boast of. The slightest perusal of his Writings indicates to us a mind of wonderful depth and originality; but at the same time, of a nature or habit so abstruse, and altogether different from anything we ourselves have notice or experience of, that to penetrate fairly into its essential character, much more to picture it forth in visual distinctness, would be an extremely difficult task. Nay, perhaps, if attempted by the means familiar to us, an impossible task: for Novalis belongs to that class of persons who do not recognise the 'syllogistic method' as the chief organ for investigating truth, or feel themselves bound at all times to stop short where its light fails them. Many of his opinions he would despair of proving in the most patient Court of Law; and would remain well content that they should be disbelieved there. He much loved, and had assiduously studied, Jacob Böhme and other mystical writers; and was, openly enough, in good part a

Mystic himself. Not indeed what we English, in common speech, call a Mystic; which means only a man whom we do not understand, and, in self-defence, reckon or would fain reckon a Dunce. Novalis was a Mystic, or had an affinity with Mysticism, in the primary and true meaning of that word, exemplified in some shape among our own Puritan Divines, and which at this day carries no opprobrium with it in Germany, or, except among certain more unimportant classes, in any other country. Nay, in this sense, great honours are recorded of Mysticism: Tasso, as may be seen in several of his prose writings, was professedly a Mystic; Dante is regarded as a chief man of that class.

Nevertheless, with all due tolerance or reverence for Novalis's Mysticism, the question still returns on us: How shall we understand it, and in any measure shadow it forth? How may that spiritual condition, which by its own account is like pure Light, colourless, formless, infinite, be represented by mere Logic-Painters, mere Engravers we might say, who, except copper and burin, producing the most finite black-on-white, have no means of representing anything? Novalis himself has a line or two, and no more, expressly on Mysticism: 'What is Mysticism?' asks he. 'What is it that should come to be treated mystically? Religion, Love, Nature, Polity.—All select things (*alles Auserwählte*) have a reference to Mysticism. If all men were but one pair of lovers, the difference between Mysticism and Non-Mysticism were at an end.' In which little sentence, unhappily, our reader obtains no clearness; feels rather as if he were looking into darkness visible. We must entreat him, nevertheless, to keep up his spirits in this business; and above all, to assist us with his friendliest, cheerfulest endeavour: perhaps some faint far-off view of that same mysterious Mysticism may at length rise upon us.

To ourselves it somewhat illustrates the nature of Novalis's opinions, when we consider the then and present state of German metaphysical science generally; and the fact, stated

above, that he gained his first notions on this subject from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. It is true, as Tieck remarks, 'he sought to open for himself a new path in Philosophy; to unite Philosophy with Religion'; and so diverged in some degree from his first instructor; or, as it more probably seemed to himself, prosecuted Fichte's scientific inquiry into its highest practical results. At all events, his metaphysical creed, so far as we can gather it from these Writings, appears everywhere in its essential lineaments synonymous with what little we understand of Fichte's, and might indeed, safely enough for our present purpose, be classed under the head of Kantism, or German metaphysics generally.

Now, without entering into the intricacies of German Philosophy, we need here only advert to the character of Idealism, on which it is everywhere founded, and which universally pervades it. In all German systems, since the time of Kant, it is the fundamental principle to deny the existence of Matter; or rather we should say, to believe it in a radically different sense from that in which the Scotch philosopher strives to demonstrate it, and the English Unphilosopher believes it without demonstration. To any of our readers, who has dipped never so slightly into metaphysical reading this Idealism will be no inconceivable thing. Indeed it is singular how widely diffused, and under what different aspects, we meet with it among the most dissimilar classes of mankind. Our Bishop Berkeley seems to have adopted it from religious inducements: Father Boscovich was led to a very cognate result, in his *Theoria Philosophiæ Naturalis*, from merely mathematical considerations. Of the ancient Pyrrho, or the modern Hume, we do not speak: but in the opposite end of the Earth, as Sir W. Jones informs us, a similar theory, of immemorial age, prevails among the theologians of Hindostan. Nay, Professor Stewart has declared his opinion, that whoever at some time of his life has not entertained this theory, may reckon that he has yet shown no talent for metaphysical research.

Neither is it any argument against the Idealist to say that, since he denies the absolute existence of Matter, he ought in conscience to deny its relative existence; and plunge over precipices, and run himself through with swords, by way of recreation, since these, like all other material things, are only phantasms and spectra, and therefore of no consequence. If a man, corporeally taken, is but a phantasm and spectrum himself, all this will ultimately amount to much the same as it did before. Yet herein lies Dr. Reid's grand triumph over the Sceptics; which is as good as no triumph whatever. For as to the argument which he and his followers insist on, under all possible variety of figures, it amounts only to this very plain consideration, that 'men naturally, and without reasoning, *believe* in the existence of Matter'; and seems, philosophically speaking, not to have any value; nay, the introduction of it into Philosophy may be considered as an act of suicide on the part of that science, the life and business of which, that of '*interpreting* Appearances,' is hereby at an end. Curious it is, moreover, to observe how these Common-sense Philosophers, men who brag chiefly of their irrefragable logic, and keep watch and ward, as if this were their special trade, against 'Mysticism' and 'Visionary Theories,' are themselves obliged to base their whole system on Mysticism, and a Theory; on Faith, in short, and that of a very comprehensive kind; the Faith, namely, either that man's Senses are themselves Divine, or that they afford not only an honest, but a *literal* representation of the workings of some Divinity. So true is it that for these men also, all knowledge of the visible rests on belief of the invisible, and derives its first meaning and certainty therefrom!

The Idealist, again, boasts that his Philosophy is Transcendental, that is, 'ascending *beyond* the senses'; which, he asserts, *all* Philosophy, properly so called, by its nature is and must be: and in this way he is led to various unexpected conclusions. To a Transcendentalist, Matter has an existence, but only as a Phenomenon: were *we* not there, neither would

it be there; it is a mere Relation, or rather the result of a Relation between our living Souls and the great First Cause; and depends for its apparent qualities on *our* bodily and mental organs; having itself *no* intrinsic qualities; being, in the common sense of that word, Nothing. The tree is green and hard, not of its own natural virtue, but simply because my eye and my hand are fashioned so as to discern such and such appearances under such and such conditions. Nay, as an Idealist might say, even on the most popular grounds, *must* it not be so? Bring a sentient Being, with eyes a little different, with fingers ten times harder than mine; and to him that Thing which I call Tree shall be yellow and soft, as truly as to me it is green and hard. Form his Nervous-structure in all points the *reverse* of mine, and this same Tree shall not be combustible or heat-producing, but dissoluble and cold-producing, not high and convex, but deep and concave; shall simply have *all* properties exactly the reverse of those I attribute to it. There is, in fact, says Fichte, no Tree there; but only a Manifestation of Power from something which is *not I.* The same is true of material Nature at large, of the whole visible Universe, with all its movements, figures, accidents and qualities; all are Impressions produced on *me* by something *different from me.* This, we suppose, may be the foundation of what Fichte means by his far-famed *Ich* and *Nicht-Ich* (I and Not-I); words which, taking lodging (to use the Hudibrastic phrase) in certain 'heads that were to be let unfurnished,' occasioned a hollow echo, as of Laughter, from the empty Apartments; though the words are in themselves quite harmless, and may represent the basis of a metaphysical Philosophy as fitly as any other words.

But farther, and what is still stranger than such Idealism, according to these Kantean systems, the organs of the Mind too, what is called the Understanding, are of no less arbitrary, and, as it were accidental character than those of the Body. Time and Space themselves are not external but internal entities: they have no outward existence, there is no Time

and no Space *out* of the mind; they are mere *forms* of man's spiritual being, *laws* under which his thinking nature is constituted to act. This seems the hardest conclusion of all; but it is an important one with Kant; and is not given forth as a dogma; but carefully deduced in his *Critik der reinen Vernunft* with great precision, and the strictest form of argument.

The reader would err widely who supposed that this Transcendental system of Metaphysics was a mere intellectual card-castle, or logical hocus-pocus, contrived from sheer idleness and for sheer idleness, being without any bearing on the practical interests of men. On the contrary, however false, or however true, it is the most serious in its purport of all Philosophies propounded in these latter centuries; has been taught chiefly by men of the loftiest and most earnest character; and does bear, with a direct and highly comprehensive influence, on the most vital interests of men. To say nothing of the views it opens in regard to the course and management of what is called Natural Science, we cannot but perceive that its effects, for such as adopt it, on Morals and Religion, must in these days be of almost boundless importance. To take only that last and seemingly strangest doctrine, for example, concerning Time and Space, we shall find that to the Kantist it yields, almost immediately, a remarkable result of this sort. If Time and Space have no absolute existence, no existence out of our minds, it removes a stumbling-block from the very threshold of our Theology. For on this ground, when we say that the Deity is omnipresent and eternal, that with Him it is a universal Here and Now, we say nothing wonderful; nothing but that He also created Time and Space, that Time and Space are not laws of His being, but only of ours. Nay, to the Transcendentalist, clearly enough, the whole question of the origin and existence of Nature must be greatly simplified · the old hostility of Matter is at an end, for Matter is itself annihilated; and the black Spectre, Atheism, 'with all its sickly dews,' melts into nothingness forever. But farther,

if it be, as Kant maintains, that the logical mechanism of the mind is arbitrary, so to speak, and might have been made different, it will follow, that all inductive conclusions, all conclusions of the Understanding, have only a relative truth, are true only for *us*, and *if* some other thing be true.

Thus far Hume and Kant go together, in this branch of the inquiry: but here occurs the most total, diametrical divergence between them. We allude to the recognition, by these Transcendentalists, of a higher faculty in man than Understanding; of Reason (*Vernunft*), the pure, ultimate light of our nature; wherein, as they assert, lies the foundation of all Poetry, Virtue, Religion; things which are properly beyond the province of the Understanding, of which the Understanding *can* take no cognisance, except a false one. The elder Jacobi, who indeed is no Kantist, says once, we remember: 'It is the instinct of Understanding to *contradict* Reason.' Admitting this last distinction and subordination, supposing it scientifically demonstrated, what numberless and weightiest consequences would follow from it alone! These we must leave the considerate reader to deduce for himself; observing only farther, that the *Teologia Mistica*, so much venerated by Tasso in his philosophical writings; the 'Mysticism' alluded to by Novalis; and generally all true Christian Faith and Devotion, appear, so far as we can see, more or less included in this doctrine of the Transcendentalists; under their several shapes, the essence of them all being what is here designated by the name Reason, and set forth as the true sovereign of man's mind.

How deeply these and the like principles had impressed themselves on Novalis, we see more and more, the farther we study his Writings. Naturally a deep, religious, contemplative spirit; purified also, as we have seen, by harsh Affliction, and familiar in the 'Sanctuary of Sorrow,' he comes before us as the most ideal of all Idealists. For him the material Creation is but an Appearance, a typical shadow in which the Deity manifests himself to man. Not only has the unseen

world a reality, but the only reality: the rest being not metaphorically, but literally and in scientific strictness, 'a show'; in the words of the Poet, '*Schall und Rauch umnebelnd Himmels Gluth*, Sound and Smoke overclouding the Splendour of Heaven.' The Invisible World is near us: or rather it is here, in us and about us; were the fleshly coil removed from our Soul, the glories of the Unseen were even now around us; as the Ancients fabled of the Spheral Music. Thus, not in word only, but in truth and sober belief, he feels himself encompassed by the Godhead; feels in every thought, that 'in Him he lives, moves, and has his being.'

On his Philosophic and Poetic procedure, all this has its natural influence. The aim of Novalis's whole Philosophy, we might say, is to preach and establish the Majesty of Reason, in that stricter sense; to conquer for it all provinces of human thought, and everywhere reduce its vassal, Understanding, into fealty, the right and only useful relation for it. Mighty tasks in this sort lay before himself; of which, in these Writings of his, we trace only scattered indications. In fact, all that he has left is in the shape of Fragment; detached expositions and combinations, deep, brief glimpses: but such seems to be their general tendency. One character to be noted in many of these, often too obscure speculations, is his peculiar manner of viewing Nature: his habit, as it were, of considering Nature rather in the concrete, not analytically and as a divisible Aggregate, but as a self-subsistent universally connected Whole. This also is perhaps partly the fruit of his Idealism. 'He had formed the Plan,' we are informed, 'of a peculiar Encyclopedical Work, in which experiences and ideas from all the different sciences were mutually to elucidate, confirm and enforce each other.' In this work he had even made some progress. Many of the 'Thoughts,' and short Aphoristic observations, here published, were intended for it; of such, apparently, it was, for the most part, to have consisted.

As a Poet, Novalis is no less Idealistic than as a Philo-

sopher. His poems are breathings of a high devout soul, feeling always that here he has no home, but looking, as in clear vision, to a 'city that hath foundations.' He loves external Nature with a singular depth; nay, we might say, he reverences her, and holds unspeakable communings with her: for Nature is no longer dead, hostile Matter, but the veil and mysterious Garment of the Unseen; as it were, the Voice with which the Deity proclaims himself to man. These two qualities,—his pure religious temper, and heartfelt love of Nature,—bring him into true poetic relation both with the spiritual and the material World, and perhaps constitute his chief worth as a Poet; for which art he seems to have originally a genuine, but no exclusive or even very decided endowment.

His moral persuasions, as evinced in his Writings and Life, derive themselves naturally enough from the same source. It is the morality of a man, to whom the Earth and all its glories are in truth a vapour and a Dream, and the Beauty of Goodness the *only* real possession. Poetry, Virtue, Religion, which for other men have but, as it were, a traditionary and imagined existence, are for him the everlasting basis of the Universe; and all earthly acquirements, all with which Ambition, Hope, Fear, can tempt us to toil and sin, are in very deed but a picture of the brain, some reflex shadowed on the mirror of the Infinite, but in themselves air and nothingness. Thus, to live in that Light of Reason, to have, even while here and encircled with this Vision of Existence, our abode in that Eternal City, is the highest and sole duty of man. These things Novalis figures to himself under various images: sometimes he seems to represent the Primeval essence of Being as Love; at other times, he speaks in emblems, of which it would be still more difficult to give a just account; which, therefore, at present, we shall not farther notice.

For now, with these far-off sketches of an exposition, the reader must hold himself ready to look into Novalis, for a little, with his own eyes. Whoever has honestly, and with

attentive outlook, accompanied us along these wondrous outskirts of Idealism, may find himself as able to interpret Novalis as the majority of German readers would be; which, we think, is fair measure on our part. We shall not attempt any farther commentary; fearing that it might be too difficult and too unthankful a business. Our first extract is from the *Lehrlinge zu Sais* (Pupils at Sais), adverted to above. That 'Physical Romance,' which, for the rest, contains no story or indication of a story, but only poetised philosophical speeches, and the strangest shadowy allegorical allusions, and indeed is only carried the length of two Chapters, commences, without note of preparation, in this singular wise:

'I. The Pupil.—Men travel in manifold paths: whoso traces and compares these, will find strange Figures come to light; Figures which seem as if they belonged to that great Cipher-writing which one meets with everywhere, on wings of birds, shells of eggs, in clouds, in the snow, in crystals, in forms of rocks, in freezing waters, in the interior and exterior of mountains, of plants, animals, men, in the lights of the sky, in plates of glass and pitch when touched and struck on, in the filings round the magnet, and the singular conjunctures of Chance. In such Figures one anticipates the key to that wondrous Writing, the grammar of it; but this Anticipation will not fix itself into shape, and appears as if, after all, it would not become such a key for us. An *Alcahest* seems poured out over the senses of men. Only for a moment will their wishes, their thoughts thicken into form. Thus do their Anticipations arise; but after short whiles, all is again swimming vaguely before them, even as it did.

'From afar I heard say, that Unintelligibility was but the result of Unintelligence; that this sought what itself had, and so could find nowhere else; also that we did not understand Speech, because Speech did not, would not, understand itself; that the genuine Sanscrit spoke for the sake of speaking, because speaking was its pleasure and its nature.

'Not long thereafter, said one: No explanation is required for Holy Writing. Whoso speaks truly is full of eternal life, and wonderfully related to genuine mysteries does his Writing appear to us, for it is a Concord from the Symphony of the Universe.

'Surely this voice meant our Teacher; for it is he that can collect the indications which lie scattered on all sides. A singular light kindles in

his looks, when at length the high Rune lies before us, and he watches in our eyes whether the star has yet risen upon us, which is to make the Figure visible and intelligible. Does he see us sad, that the darkness will not withdraw? He consoles us, and promises the faithful assiduous seer better fortune in time. Often has he told us how, when he was a child, the impulse to employ his senses, to busy, to fill them, left him no rest. He looked at the stars, and imitated their courses and positions in the sand. Into the ocean of air he gazed incessantly; and never wearied contemplating its clearness, its movements, its clouds, its lights. He gathered stones, flowers, insects, of all sorts, and spread them out in manifold wise, in rows before him. To men and animals he paid heed; on the shore of the sea he sat, collected mussels. Over his own heart and his own thoughts he watched attentively. He knew not whither his longing was carrying him. As he grew up, he wandered far and wide; viewed other lands, other seas, new atmospheres, new rocks, unknown plants, animals, men; descended into caverns, saw how in courses and varying strata the edifice of the Earth was completed, and fashioned clay into strange figures of rocks. By and by, he came to find everywhere objects already known, but wonderfully mingled, united; and thus often extraordinary things came to shape in him. He soon became aware of combinations in all, of conjunctures, concurrences. Erelong, he no more saw anything alone.—In great variegated images, the perceptions of his senses crowded round him; he heard, saw, touched and thought at once. He rejoiced to bring strangers together. Now the stars were men, now men were stars, the stones animals, the clouds plants; he sported with powers and appearances; he knew where and how this and that was to be found, to be brought into action; and so himself struck over the strings, for tones and touches of his own.

'What has passed with him since then he does not disclose to us. He tells us that we ourselves, led on by him and our own desire, will discover what has passed with him. Many of us have withdrawn from him. They returned to their parents, and learned trades. Some have been sent out by him, we know not whither; he selected them. Of these, some have been but a short time there, others longer. One was still a child; scarcely was he come, when our Teacher was for passing him any more instruction. This child had large dark eyes with azure ground, his skin shone like lilies, and his locks like light little clouds when it is growing evening. His voice pierced through all our hearts; willingly would we have given him our flowers, stones, pens, all we had. He smiled with an infinite earnestness; and we had a strange delight beside him. One day he will come again, said our Teacher, and then our lessons end.—Along with him he sent one, for whom we had often been sorry. Always sad he looked; he had been long years here; nothing

would succeed with him; when we sought crystals or flowers, he seldom found. He saw dimly at a distance; to lay down variegated rows skilfully he had no power. He was so apt to break everything. Yet none had such eagerness, such pleasure in hearing and listening. At last,—it was before that Child came into our circle,—he all at once grew cheerful and expert. One day he had gone out sad; he did not return, and the night came on. We were very anxious for him; suddenly, as the morning dawned, we heard his voice in a neighbouring grove. He was singing a high, joyful song; we were all surprised; the Teacher looked to the East, such a look as I shall never see in him again. The singer soon came forth to us, and brought, with unspeakable blessedness on his face, a simple-looking little stone, of singular shape. The Teacher took it in his hand, and kissed him long; then looked at us with wet eyes, and laid this little stone on an empty space, which lay in the midst of other stones, just where, like radii, many rows of them met together.

'I shall in no time forget that moment. We felt as if we had had in our souls a clear passing glimpse into this wondrous World.'

In these strange Oriental delineations the judicious reader will suspect that more may be meant than meets the ear. But who this teacher at Sais is, whether the personified Intellect of Mankind; and who this bright-faced golden-locked Child (Reason, Religious Faith?), that was 'to come again,' to conclude these lessons; and that awkward unwearied Man (Understanding?), that 'was so apt to break everything,' we have no data for determining, and would not undertake to conjecture with any certainty. We subjoin a passage from the second chapter, or section, entitled '*Nature*,' which, if possible, is of a still more surprising character than the first. After speaking at some length on the primeval views Man seems to have formed with regard to the external Universe, or 'the manifold Objects of his Senses'; and how in those times his mind had a peculiar unity, and only by Practice divided itself into separate faculties, as by Practice it may yet farther do, 'our Pupil' proceeds to describe the conditions requisite in an inquirer into Nature, observing, in conclusion, with regard to this,—

'No one, of a surety, wanders farther from the mark than he who fancies to himself that he already understands this marvellous Kingdom,

and can, in few words, fathom its constitution, and everywhere find the right path. To no one, who has broken off, and made himself an Island, will insight rise of itself, nor even without toilsome effort. Only to children, or childlike men, who know not what they do, can this happen. Long, unwearied intercourse, free and wise Contemplation, attention to faint tokens and indications; an inward poet-life, practised senses, a simple and devout spirit: these are the essential requisites of a true Friend of Nature; without these no one can attain his wish. Not wise does it seem to attempt comprehending and understanding a Human World without full perfected Humanity. No talent must sleep; and if all are not alike active, all must be alert, and not oppressed and enervated. As we see a future Painter in the boy who fills every wall with sketches and variedly adds colour to figure; so we see a future Philosopher in him who restlessly traces and questions all natural things, pays heed to all, brings together whatever is remarkable, and rejoices when he has become master and possessor of a new phenomenon, of a new power and piece of knowledge.

'Now to Some it appears not at all worth while to follow out the endless divisions of Nature; and moreover a dangerous undertaking, without fruit and issue. As we can never reach, say they, the absolutely smallest grain of material bodies, never find their simplest compartments, since all magnitude loses itself, forwards and backwards, in infinitude; so likewise is it with the species of bodies and powers; here too one comes on new species, new combinations, new appearances, even to infinitude. These seem only to stop, continue they, when our diligence tires; and so it is spending precious time with idle contemplations and tedious enumerations; and this becomes at last a true delirium, a real vertigo over the horrid Deep. For Nature too remains, so far as we have yet come, ever a frightful Machine of Death: everywhere monstrous revolution, inexplicable vortices of movement; a kingdom of Devouring, of the maddest tyranny; a baleful Immense: the few light-points disclose but a so much the more appalling Night, and terrors of all sorts must palsy every observer. Like a saviour does Death stand by the hapless race of mankind; for without Death, the maddest were the happiest. And precisely this striving to fathom that gigantic Mechanism is already a draught towards the Deep, a commencing giddiness; for every excitement is an increasing whirl, which soon gains full mastery over its victim, and hurls him forward with it into the fearful Night. Here, say those lamenters, lies the crafty snare for man's understanding, which Nature everywhere seeks to annihilate as her greatest foe. Hail to that childlike ignorance and innocence of men, which kept them blind to the horrible perils that everywhere, like grim thunder-clouds, lay round their peaceful dwelling, and each moment were ready to rush down on

them. Only inward disunion among the powers of Nature has preserved men hitherto; nevertheless, that great epoch cannot fail to arrive, when the whole family of mankind, by a grand universal Resolve, will snatch themselves from this sorrowful condition, from this frightful imprisonment; and by a voluntary Abdication of their terrestrial abode, redeem their race from this anguish, and seek refuge in a happier world, with their ancient Father. Thus might they end worthily; and prevent a necessary violent destruction; or a still more horrible degenerating into Beasts, by gradual dissolution of their thinking organs through Insanity. Intercourse with the powers of Nature, with animals, plants, rocks, storms and waves, must necessarily assimilate men to these objects; and this Assimilation, this Metamorphosis, and dissolution of the Divine and the Human, into ungovernable Forces, is even the Spirit of Nature, that frightfully voracious power: and is not all that we see even now a prey from Heaven, a great Ruin of former Glories, the Remains of a terrific Repast?

'Be it so, cry a more courageous Class; let our species maintain a stubborn, well-planned war of destruction with this same Nature, then. By slow poisons must we endeavour to subdue her. The Inquirer into Nature is a noble hero, who rushes into the open abyss for the deliverance of his fellow-citizens. Artists have already played her many a trick: do but continue in this course; get hold of the secret threads, and bring them to act against each other. Profit by these discords, that so in the end you may lead her, like that fire-breathing Bull, according to your pleasure. To you she must become obedient. Patience and Faith beseem the children of men. Distant Brothers are united with us for one object; the wheel of the Stars must become the cistern-wheel of our life, and then, by our slaves, we can build us a new Fairyland. With heartfelt triumph let us look at her devastations, her tumults; she is selling herself to us, and every violence she will pay by a heavy penalty. In the inspiring feeling of our Freedom, let us live and die; here gushes forth the stream, which will one day overflow and subdue her; in it let us bathe, and refresh ourselves for new exploits. Hither the rage of the Monster does not reach; one drop of Freedom is sufficient to cripple her forever, and forever set limits to her havoc.

'They are right, say Several; here, or nowhere, lies the talisman. By the well of Freedom we sit and look; it is the grand magic Mirror, where the whole Creation images itself, pure and clear; in it do the tender Spirits and Forms of all Nature bathe; all chambers we here behold unlocked. What need have we toilsomely to wander over the troublous World of visible things? The purer World lies even in us, in this Well. Here discloses itself the true meaning of the great, many-coloured, complected Scene; and if full of these sights we return into

Nature, all is well known to us, with certainty we distinguish every shape. We need not to inquire long; a light Comparison, a few strokes in the sand, are enough to inform us. Thus, for us, is the whole a great Writing, to which we have the key; and nothing comes to us unexpected, for the course of the great Horologe is known to us beforehand. It is only we that enjoy Nature with full senses, because she does not frighten us from our senses; because no fever-dreams oppress us, and serene consciousness makes us calm and confiding.

'They are *not* right, says an earnest Man to these latter. Can they not recognise in Nature the true impress of their own Selves? It is even they that consume themselves in wild hostility to Thought. They know not that this so-called Nature of theirs is a Sport of the Mind, a waste Fantasy of their Dream. Of a surety, it is for them a horrible Monster, a strange grotesque Shadow of their own Passions. The waking man looks without fear at this offspring of his lawless Imagination; for he knows that they are but vain Spectres of his weakness. He feels himself lord of the world: his *Me* hovers victorious over the Abyss; and will through Eternities hover aloft above that endless Vicissitude. Harmony is what his spirit strives to promulgate, to extend. He will even to infinitude grow more and more harmonious with himself and with his Creation; and at every step behold the all-efficiency of a high moral Order in the Universe, and what is purest of his *Me* come forth into brighter and brighter clearness. The significance of the World is Reason; for her sake is the World here; and when it is grown to be the arena of a childlike, expanding Reason, it will one day become the divine Image of her Activity, the scene of a genuine Church. Till then let man honour Nature as the Emblem of his own Spirit; the Emblem ennobling itself, along with him, to unlimited degrees. Let him, therefore, who would arrive at knowledge of Nature, train his moral sense, let him act and conceive in accordance with the noble Essence of his Soul; and as if of herself Nature will become open to him. Moral Action is that great and only Experiment, in which all riddles of the most manifold appearances explain themselves. Whoso understands it, and in rigid sequence of Thought can lay it open, is forever Master of Nature.'[1]

'The Pupil,' it is added, 'listens with alarm to these conflicting voices.' If such was the case in half-supernatural Sais, it may well be much more so in mere sublunary London. Here again, however, in regard to these vaporous lucubrations, we can only imitate Jean Paul's Quintus Fixlein, who, it is

[1] Bd. ii. s. 43-57.

said, in his elaborate *Catalogue of German Errors of the Press*, 'states that important inferences are to be drawn from it, and advises the reader to draw them.' Perhaps these wonderful paragraphs, which look, at this distance, so like chasms filled with mere sluggish mist, might prove valleys, with a clear stream and soft pastures, were we near at hand. For one thing, either Novalis, with Tieck and Schlegel at his back, are men in a state of derangement; or there is more in Heaven and Earth than has been dreamt of in our Philosophy. We may add that, in our view, this last Speaker, the 'earnest Man,' seems evidently to be Fichte; the first two Classes look like some sceptical or atheistic brood, unacquainted with Bacon's *Novum Organum*, or having, the First class at least, almost no faith in it. That theory of the human species ending by a universal simultaneous act of Suicide, will, to the more simple sort of readers, be new.

As farther and more directly illustrating Novalis's scientific views, we may here subjoin two short sketches, taken from another department of this Volume. To all who prosecute Philosophy, and take interest in its history and present aspects, they will not be without interest. The obscure parts of them are not perhaps unintelligible, but only obscure; which unluckily cannot, at all times, be helped in such cases:

'Common Logic is the Grammar of the higher Speech, that is, of Thought; it examines merely the *relations* of ideas to one another, the *Mechanics* of Thought, the pure Physiology of ideas. Now logical ideas stand related to one another, like words without thoughts. Logic occupies itself with the mere dead Body of the Science of Thinking.—Metaphysics, again, is the *Dynamics* of Thought; treats of the primary *Powers* of Thought; occupies itself with the mere Soul of the Science of Thinking. Metaphysical ideas stand related to one another, like thoughts without words. Men often wondered at the stubborn Incompletibility of these two Sciences; each followed its own business by itself; there was a want everywhere, nothing would suit rightly with either. From the very first, attempts were made to unite them, as everything about them indicated relationship; but every attempt failed; the one or the other Science still suffered in these attempts, and lost its essential character. We had to abide by metaphysical Logic, and logical Meta-

physic, but neither of them was as it should be. With Physiology and Psychology, with Mechanics and Chemistry, it fared no better. In the latter half of this Century there arose, with us Germans, a more violent commotion than ever; the hostile masses towered themselves up against each other more fiercely than heretofore; the fermentation was extreme; there followed powerful explosions. And now some assert that a real Compenetration has somewhere or other taken place; that the germ of a union has arisen, which will grow by degrees, and assimilate all to one indivisible form: that this principle of Peace is pressing out irresistibly on all sides, and that erelong there will be but one Science and one Spirit, as one Prophet and one God.'—

'The rude, discursive Thinker is the Scholastic (Schoolman Logician). The true Scholastic is a mystical Subtlist; out of logical Atoms he builds his Universe; he annihilates all living Nature, to put an Artifice of Thoughts (*Gedankenkunststück*, literally Conjuror's-trick of Thoughts) in its room. His aim is an infinite Automaton. Opposite to him is the rude, intuitive Poet: this is a mystical Macrologist: he hates rules and fixed form; a wild, violent life reigns instead of it in Nature; all is animate, no law; wilfulness and wonder everywhere. He is merely dynamical. Thus does the Philosophic Spirit arise at first, in altogether separate masses. In the *second* stage of culture these masses begin to come in contact, multifariously enough; and, as in the union of infinite Extremes, the Finite, the Limited arises, so here also arise "Eclectic Philosophers" without number; the time of misunderstanding begins. The most limited is, in this stage, the most important, the purest Philosopher of the second stage. This class occupies itself wholly with the actual, present world, in the strictest sense. The Philosophers of the first class look down with contempt on those of the second; say, they are a little of everything, and so nothing; hold their views as the results of weakness, as Inconsequentism. On the contrary, the second class, in their turn, pity the first; lay the blame on their visionary enthusiasm, which they say is absurd, even to insanity.

'If on the one hand the Scholastics and Alchemists seem to be utterly at variance, and the Eclectics on the other hand quite at one, yet, strictly examined, it is altogether the reverse. The former, in essentials, are indirectly of one opinion; namely, as regards the non-dependence, and infinite character of Meditation, they both set out from the Absolute: whilst the Eclectic and limited sort are essentially at variance; and agree only in what is deduced. The former are infinite but uniform, the latter bounded but multiform; the former have genius, the latter talent; those have Ideas, these have knacks (*Handgriffe*); those are heads without hands, these are hands without heads. The *third* stage is for the Artist, who can be at once implement and genius. He finds that that primitive

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Separation in the absolute Philosophical Activities' (between the Scholastic, and the "rude, intuitive Poet") 'is a deeper-lying Separation in his own Nature; which Separation indicates, by its existence as such, the possibility of being adjusted, of being joined: he finds that, heterogeneous as these Activities are, there is yet a faculty in him of passing from the one to the other, of changing his *polarity* at will. He discovers in them, therefore, necessary members of his spirit; he observes that both must be united in some common Principle. He infers that Eclecticism is nothing but the imperfect defective employment of this Principle. It becomes——'

—But we need not struggle farther, wringing a significance out of these mysterious words: in delineating the genuine Transcendentalist, or 'Philosopher of the third stage,' properly speaking *the* Philosopher, Novalis ascends into regions whither few readers would follow him. It may be observed here that British Philosophy, tracing it from Duns Scotus to Dugald Stewart, has now gone through the first and second of these 'stages,' the Scholastic and the Eclectic, and in considerable honour. With our amiable Professor Stewart, than whom no man, not Cicero himself, was ever more entirely Eclectic, that second or Eclectic class may be considered as having terminated; and now Philosophy is at a stand among us, or rather there is now no Philosophy visible in these Islands. It remains to be seen, whether we also are to have our 'third stage'; and how that new and highest 'class' will demean itself here. The French Philosophers seem busy studying Kant, and writing of him: but we rather imagine Novalis would pronounce them still only in the Eclectic stage. He says afterwards, that 'all Eclectics are essentially and at bottom sceptics; the more comprehensive, the more sceptical.'

These two passages have been extracted from a large series of *Fragments*, which, under the three divisions of Philosophical, Critical, Moral, occupy the greatest part of Volume Second. They are fractions, as we hinted above, of that grand 'encyclopedical work' which Novalis had planned. Friedrich Schlegel is said to be the selector of those published here. They come before us without note or comment; worded for

the most part in very unusual phraseology; and without repeated and most patient investigation, seldom yield any significance, or rather we should say, often yield a false one. A few of the clearest we have selected for insertion: whether the reader will think them 'Pollen of Flowers,' or a baser kind of dust, we shall not predict. We give them in a miscellaneous shape; overlooking those classifications which, even in the text, are not and could not be very rigidly adhered to.

'Philosophy can bake no bread; but she can procure for us God, Freedom, Immortality. Which, then, is more practical, Philosophy or Economy?—

'Philosophy is properly Home-sickness; the wish to be everywhere at home.—

'We are near awakening when we dream that we dream.—

'The true philosophical Act is annihilation of self (*Selbsttödtung*); this is the real beginning of all Philosophy; all requisites for being a Disciple of Philosophy point hither. This Act alone corresponds to all the conditions and characteristics of transcendental conduct.—

'To become properly acquainted with a truth, we must first have disbelieved it, and disputed against it.—

'Man is the higher Sense of our Planet; the star which connects it with the upper world; the eye which it turns towards Heaven.—

'Life is a disease of the spirit; a working incited by Passion. Rest is peculiar to the spirit.—

'Our life is no Dream, but it may and will perhaps become one.—

'What is Nature? An encyclopedical, systematic Index or Plan of our Spirit. Why will we content us with the mere catalogue of our Treasures? Let us contemplate them ourselves, and in all ways elaborate and use them.—

'If our Bodily Life is a burning, our Spiritual Life is a being burnt, a Combustion (or, is precisely the inverse the case?); Death, therefore, perhaps a Change of Capacity.—

'Sleep is for the inhabitants of Planets only. In another time, Man will sleep and wake continually at once. The greater part of our Body, of our Humanity itself, yet sleeps a deep sleep.—

'There is but one Temple in the World; and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven, when we lay our hand on a human body.—

'Man is a Sun; his Senses are the Planets.—

'Man has ever expressed some symbolical Philosophy of his Being in his Works and Conduct; he announces himself and his Gospel of Nature; he is the Messiah of Nature.—

'Plants are Children of the Earth; we are Children of the Æther. Our Lungs are properly our Root; we live, when we breathe; we begin our life with breathing.—

'Nature is an Æolian Harp, a musical instrument; whose tones again are keys to higher strings in us.—

'Every beloved object is the centre of a Paradise.—

'The first Man is the first Spirit-seer; all appears to him as Spirit. What are children, but first men? The fresh gaze of the Child is richer in significance than the forecasting of the most indubitable Seer.—

'It depends only on the weakness of our organs and of our self-excitement (*Selbstberührung*), that we do not see ourselves in a Fairy-world. All Fabulous Tales (*Mährchen*) are merely dreams of that home world, which is everywhere and nowhere. The higher powers in us, which one day as Genies, shall fulfil our will,[1] are, for the present, Muses, which refresh us on our toilsome course with sweet remembrances.—

'Man consists in Truth. If he exposes Truth, he exposes himself. If he betrays Truth, he betrays himself. We speak not here of Lies, but of acting against Conviction.—

'A character is a completely fashioned will (*vollkommen gebildeter Wille*).—

'There is, properly speaking, no Misfortune in the world. Happiness and Misfortune stand in continual balance. Every Misfortune is, as it were, the obstruction of a stream, which, after overcoming this obstruction, but bursts through with the greater force.—

'The ideal of Morality has no more dangerous rival than the ideal of highest Strength, of most powerful life; which also has been named (very falsely as it was there meant) the ideal of poetic greatness. It is the maximum of the savage; and has, in these times, gained, precisely among the greatest weaklings, very many proselytes. By this ideal, man becomes a Beast-Spirit, a Mixture; whose brutal wit has, for weaklings, a brutal power of attraction.—

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[1] Novalis's ideas, on what has been called the 'perfectibility of man,' ground themselves on his peculiar views of the constitution of material and spiritual Nature, and are of the most original and extraordinary character. With our utmost effort, we should despair of communic ting other than a quite false notion of them. He asks, for instance, with scientific gravity: Whether any one, that recollects the first kind glance of her he loved, can doubt the possibility of *Magic*?

'The spirit of Poesy is the morning light, which makes the Statue of Memnon sound.—

'The division of Philosopher and Poet is only apparent, and to the disadvantage of both. It is a sign of disease, and of a sickly constitution.—

'The true Poet is all-knowing; he is an actual world in miniature.—

'Klopstock's works appear, for the most part, free Translations of an unknown Poet, by a very talented but unpoetical Philologist.—

'Goethe is an altogether practical Poet. He is in his works what the English are in their wares: highly simple, neat, convenient and durable. He has done in German Literature what Wedgwood did in English Manufacture. He has, like the English, a natural turn for Economy, and a noble Taste acquired by Understanding. Both these are very compatible, and have a near affinity in the chemical sense. * *—*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* may be called throughout prosaic and modern. The Romantic sinks to ruin, the Poesy of Nature, the Wonderful. The Book treats merely of common worldly things: Nature and Mysticism are altogether forgotten. It is a poetised civic and household History; the Marvellous is expressly treated therein as imagination and enthusiasm. Artistic Atheism is the spirit of the Book. * * * It is properly a *Candide*, directed against Poetry: the Book is highly unpoetical in respect of spirit, poetical as the dress and body of it are. * * * The introduction of Shakspeare has almost a tragic effect. The hero retards the triumph of the Gospel of Economy; and economical Nature is finally the true and only remaining one.—

'When we speak of the aim and Art observable in Shakspeare's works, we must not forget that Art belongs to Nature; that it is, so to speak, self-viewing, self-imitating, self-fashioning Nature. The Art of a well-developed genius is far different from the Artfulness of the Understanding, of the merely reasoning mind. Shakspeare was no calculator, no learned thinker; he was a mighty, many-gifted soul, whose feelings and works, like products of Nature, bear the stamp of the same spirit; and in which the last and deepest of observers will still find new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe; concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man. They are emblematic, have many meanings, are simple and inexhaustible, like products of Nature; and nothing more unsuitable could be said of them than that they are works of Art, in that narrow mechanical acceptation of the word.'

The reader understands that we offer these specimens not as the best to be found in Novalis's *Fragments*, but simply as the most intelligible. Far stranger and deeper things there

are, could we hope to make them in the smallest degree understood. But in examining and reëxamining many of his *Fragments*, we find ourselves carried into more complex, more subtle regions of thought than any we are elsewhere acquainted with: here we cannot always find our own latitude and longitude, sometimes not even approximate to finding them; much less teach others such a secret.

What has been already quoted may afford some knowledge of Novalis, in the characters of Philosopher and Critic: there is one other aspect under which it would be still more curious to view and exhibit him, but still more difficult,—we mean that of his Religion. Novalis nowhere specially records his creed, in these Writings: he many times expresses, or implies, a zealous, heartfelt belief in the Christian system; yet with such adjuncts and coexisting persuasions, as to us might seem rather surprising. One or two more of these his Aphorisms, relative to this subject, we shall cite, as likely to be better than any description of ours. The whole Essay at the end of Volume First, entitled *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (Christianity or Europe) is also well worthy of study, in this as in many other points of view.

'Religion contains infinite sadness. If we are to love God, he must be in distress (*hülfsbedürftig*, help-needing). In how far is this condition answered in Christianity?—

'Spinoza is a God-intoxicated man (*Gott-trunkener Mensch*).—

'Is the Devil, as Father of Lies, himself but a necessary illusion?—

'The Catholic Religion is to a certain extent applied Christianity. Fichte's Philosophy too is perhaps applied Christianity.—

'Can Miracles work Conviction? Or is not real Conviction, this highest function of our soul and personality, the only true God-announcing Miracle?

'The Christian Religion is especially remarkable, moreover, as it so decidedly lays claim to mere good-will in Man, to his essential Temper, and values this independently of all Culture and Manifestation. It stands in opposition to Science and to Art, and *properly to Enjoyment*.[1]

'Its origin is with the common people. It inspires the great majority of the *limited* in this Earth.

[1] Italics also in the text.

'It is the Light that begins to shine in the Darkness.

'It is the root of *all Democracy*, the highest Fact in the Rights of Man (*die höchste Thatsache der Popularität*).

'Its unpoetical exterior, its resemblance to a modern family-picture, *seems only to be lent it.*[1]

'Martyrs are spiritual heroes. Christ was the greatest martyr of our species; through him has martyrdom become infinitely significant and holy.—

'The Bible begins nobly, with Paradise, the symbol of youth; and concludes with the Eternal Kingdom, the Holy City. Its two main divisions, also, are genuine grand-historical divisions (*ächt gross-historisch*). For in every grand-historical compartment (*Glied*), the grand history must lie, as it were, symbolically re-created (*verjüngt*, made young again). The beginning of the New Testament is the second higher Fall (the Atonement of the Fall), and the commencement of the new Period. The history of every individual man should be a Bible. Christ is a new Adam. A Bible is the highest problem of Authorship.—

'As yet there is no Religion. You must first make a Seminary (*Bildungs-schule*) of genuine Religion. Think ye that there is Religion? Religion has to be made and produced (*gemacht und hervorgebracht*) by the union of a number of persons.'

Hitherto our readers have seen nothing of Novalis in his character of Poet, properly so called; the *Pupils at Sais* being fully more of a scientific than poetic nature. As hinted above, we do not account his gifts in this latter province as of the first, or even of a high order; unless, indeed, it be true, as he himself maintains, that 'the distinction of Poet and Philosopher is apparent only, and to the injury of both.' In his professedly poetical compositions there is an indubitable prolixity, a degree of languor, not weakness but sluggishness; the meaning is too much diluted; and diluted, we might say, not in a rich, lively, varying music, as we find in Tieck, for example; but rather in a low-voiced, not unmelodious monotony, the deep hum of which is broken only at rare intervals, though sometimes by tones of purest and almost spiritual softness. We here allude chiefly to his unmetrical pieces, his prose fictions: indeed the metrical are few in

[1] Italics also in the text.

number; for the most part, on religious subjects; and in spite of a decided truthfulness both in feeling and word, seem to bespeak no great skill or practice in that form of composition. In his prose style he may be accounted happier; he aims in general at simplicity, and a certain familiar expressiveness; here and there, in his more elaborate passages, especially in his *Hymns to the Night*, he has reminded us of Herder.

These *Hymns to the Night*, it will be remembered, were written shortly after the death of his mistress: in that period of deep sorrow, or rather of holy deliverance from sorrow. Novalis himself regarded them as his most finished productions. They are of a strange, veiled, almost enigmatical character; nevertheless, more deeply examined, they appear nowise without true poetic worth; there is a vastness, an immensity of idea; a still solemnity reigns in them, a solitude almost as of extinct worlds. Here and there too some light-beam visits us in the void deep; and we cast a glance, clear and wondrous, into the secrets of that mysterious soul. A full commentary on the *Hymns to the Night* would be an exposition of Novalis's whole theological and moral creed: for it lies recorded there, though symbolically, and in lyric, not in didactic language. We have translated the Third, as the shortest and simplest; imitating its light, half-measured style, above all deciphering its vague deep-laid sense, as accurately as we could. By the word 'Night,' it will be seen, Novalis means much more than the common opposite of Day. 'Light' seems, in these poems, to shadow forth our terrestrial life; Night the primeval and celestial life:

'Once when I was shedding bitter tears, when dissolved in pain my Hope had melted away, and I stood solitary by the grave that in its dark narrow space concealed the Form of my life; solitary as no other had been; chased by unutterable anguish; powerless; one thought and that of misery;—here now as I looked round for help; forward could not go, nor backward, but clung to a transient extinguished Life with unutterable longing;—lo, from the azure distance, down from the heights of my old Blessedness, came a chill breath of Dusk, and suddenly the

band of Birth, the fetter of Life was snapped asunder. Vanishes the Glory of Earth, and with it my Lamenting; rushes together the infinite Sadness into a new unfathomable World: thou Night's-inspiration, Slumber of Heaven, camest over me; the scene rose gently aloft; over the scene hovered my enfranchised new-born spirit; to a cloud of dust that grave changed itself; through the cloud I beheld the transfigured features of my Beloved. In her eyes lay Eternity; I clasped her hand, and my tears became a glittering indissoluble chain. Centuries of Ages moved away into the distance, like thunder-clouds. On her neck I wept, for this new life, enrapturing tears.—It was my first, only Dream; and ever since then do I feel this changeless everlasting faith in the Heaven of Night, and its Sun my Beloved.'

What degree of critical satisfaction, what insight into the grand crisis of Novalis's spiritual history, which seems to be here shadowed forth, our readers may derive from this Third *Hymn to the Night*, we shall not pretend to conjecture. Meanwhile, it were giving them a false impression of the Poet, did we leave him here; exhibited only under his more mystic aspects; as if his Poetry were exclusively a thing of Allegory, dwelling amid Darkness and Vacuity, far from all paths of ordinary mortals and their thoughts. Novalis can write in the most common style, as well as in this most uncommon one; and there too not without originality. By far the greater part of his First Volume is occupied with a Romance, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, written, so far as it goes, much in the everyday manner; we have adverted the less to it, because we nowise reckoned it among his most remarkable compositions. Like many of the others, it has been left as a Fragment; nay, from the account Tieck gives of its ulterior plan, and how from the solid prose world of the First part, this 'Apotheosis of Poetry' was to pass, in the Second, into a mythical, fairy and quite fantastic world, critics have doubted whether, strictly speaking, it *could* have been completed. From this work we select two passages, as specimens of Novalis's manner in the more common style of composition; premising, which in this one instance we are entitled to do, that whatever excellence they may have will be

universally appreciable. The first is the introduction to the whole Narrative, as it were the text of the whole; the 'Blue Flower' there spoken of being Poetry, the real object, passion and vocation of young Heinrich, which, through manifold adventures, exertions and sufferings, he is to seek and find. His history commences thus:

'The old people were already asleep; the clock was beating its monotonous tick on the wall; the wind blustered over the rattling windows; by turns, the chamber was lighted by the sheen of the moon. The young man lay restless in his bed; and thought of the stranger and his stories. "Not the treasures is it," said he to himself, "that have awakened in me so unspeakable a desire; far from me is all covetousness; but the Blue Flower is what I long to behold. It lies incessantly in my heart, and I can think and fancy of nothing else. Never did I feel so before: it is as if, till now, I had been dreaming, or as if sleep had carried me into another world; for in the world I used to live in, who troubled himself about flowers? Such wild passion for a Flower was never heard of there. But whence could that stranger have come? None of us ever saw such a man; yet I know not how I alone was so caught with his discourse: the rest heard the very same, yet none seems to mind it. And then that I cannot even speak of my strange condition! I feel such rapturous contentment; and only then when I have not the Flower rightly before my eyes, does so deep, heartfelt an eagerness come over me; these things no one will or can believe. I could fancy I were mad, if I did not see, did not think with such perfect clearness; since that day, all is far better known to me. I have heard tell of ancient times; how animals and trees and rocks used to speak with men. This is even my feeling: as if they were on the point of breaking out, and I could see in them, what they wished to say to me. There must be many a word which I know not; did I know more, I could better comprehend these matters. Once I liked dancing; now I had rather think to the music."—The young man lost himself, by degrees, in sweet fancies, and fell asleep. He dreamed first of immeasurable distances, and wild unknown regions. He wandered over seas with incredible speed; strange animals he saw; he lived with many varieties of men, now in war, in wild tumult, now in peaceful huts. He was taken captive, and fell into the lowest wretchedness. All emotions rose to a height as yet unknown to him. He lived through an infinitely variegated life; died and came back; loved to the highest passion, and then again was forever parted from his loved one.

'At length towards morning, as the dawn broke up without, his spirit

also grew stiller, the images grew clearer and more permanent. It seemed to him he was walking alone in a dark wood. Only here and there did day glimmer through the green net. Ere long he came to a rocky chasm, which mounted upwards. He had to climb over many crags, which some former stream had rolled down. The higher he came, the lighter grew the wood. At last he arrived at a little meadow, which lay on the declivity of the mountain. Beyond the meadow rose a high cliff, at the foot of which he observed an opening, that seemed to be the entrance of a passage hewn in the rock. The passage led him easily on, for some time, to a great subterranean expanse, out of which from afar a bright gleam was visible. On entering, he perceived a strong beam of light, which sprang as if from a fountain to the roof of the cave, and sprayed itself into innumerable sparks, which collected below in a great basin: the beam glanced like kindled gold: not the faintest noise was to be heard, a sacred silence encircled the glorious sight. He approached the basin, which waved and quivered with infinite hues. The walls of the cave were coated with this fluid, which was not hot but cool, and on the walls threw out a faint bluish light. He dipt his hand in the basin, and wetted his lips. It was as if the breath of a spirit went through him; and he felt himself in his inmost heart strengthened and refreshed. An irresistible desire seized him to bathe; he undressed himself and stept into the basin. He felt as if a sunset cloud were floating round him; a heavenly emotion streamed over his soul; in deep pleasure innumerable thoughts strove to blend within him; new, unseen images arose, which also melted together, and became visible beings around him; and every wave of that lovely element pressed itself on him like a soft bosom. The flood seemed a Spirit of Beauty, which from moment to moment was taking form round the youth.

'Intoxicated with rapture, and yet conscious of every impression, he floated softly down that glittering stream, which flowed out from the basin into the rocks. A sort of sweet slumber fell upon him, in which he dreamed indescribable adventures, and out of which a new light awoke him. He found himself on a soft sward at the margin of a spring, which welled out into the air, and seemed to dissipate itself there. Dark-blue rocks, with many-coloured veins, rose at some distance; the daylight which encircled him was clearer and milder than the common; the sky was black-blue, and altogether pure. But what attracted him infinitely most was a high, light-blue Flower, which stood close by the spring, touching it with its broad glittering leaves. Round it stood innumerable flowers of all colours, and the sweetest perfume filled the air. He saw nothing but the Blue Flower; and gazed on it long with nameless tenderness. At last he was for approaching, when all at once it began to move and change; the leaves grew more resplendent, and clasped

themselves round the waxing stem ; the Flower bent itself towards him ; and the petals showed like a blue spreading ruff, in which hovered a lovely face. His sweet astonishment at this transformation was increasing,—when suddenly his mother's voice awoke him, and he found himself in the house of his parents, which the morning sun was already gilding.'

Our next and last extract is likewise of a dream. Young Heinrich with his mother travels a long journey to see his grandfather at Augsburg; converses, on the way, with merchants, miners and red-cross warriors (for it is in the time of the Crusades); and soon after his arrival falls immeasurably in love with Matilda, the Poet Klingsohr's daughter, whose face was that fairest one he had seen in his old vision of the Blue Flower. Matilda, it would appear, is to be taken from him by death (as Sophie was from Novalis): meanwhile, dreading no such event, Heinrich abandons himself with full heart to his new emotions:

'He went to the window. The choir of the Stars stood in the deep heaven ; and in the east a white gleam announced the coming day.

'Full of rapture, Heinrich exclaimed : "You, ye everlasting Stars, ye silent wanderers, I call you to witness my sacred oath. For Matilda will I live, and eternal faith shall unite my heart and hers. For me too the morn of an everlasting day is dawning. The night is by: to the rising Sun, I kindle myself as a sacrifice that will never be extinguished."

'Heinrich was heated ; and not till late, towards morning, did he fall asleep. In strange dreams the thoughts of his soul embodied themselves. A deep-blue river gleamed from the plain. On its smooth surface floated a bark ; Matilda was sitting there, and steering. She was adorned with garlands ; was singing a simple Song, and looking over to him with fond sadness. His bosom was full of anxiety. He knew not why. The sky was clear, the stream calm. Her heavenly countenance was mirrored in the waves. All at once the bark began to whirl. He called earnestly to her. She smiled and laid down her oar in the boat, which continued whirling. An unspeakable terror took hold of him. He dashed into the stream ; but he could not get forward ; the water carried him. She beckoned, she seemed as if she wished to say something to him ; the bark was filling with water ; yet she smiled with unspeakable affection, and looked cheerfully into the vortex. All at once it drew her in. A faint breath rippled over the stream, which flowed on as calm and glittering as before. His horrid agony robbed him of consciousness.

His heart ceased beating. On returning to himself, he was again on dry land. It seemed as if he had floated far. It was a strange region. He knew not what had passed with him. His heart was gone. Unthinking he walked deeper into the country. He felt inexpressibly weary. A little well gushed from a hill; it sounded like perfect bells. With his hand he lifted some drops, and wetted his parched lips. Like a sick dream, lay the frightful event behind him. Farther and farther he walked; flowers and trees spoke to him. He felt so well, so at home in the scene. Then he heard that simple Song again. He ran after the sounds. Suddenly some one held him by the clothes. "Dear Henry," cried a well-known voice. He looked round, and Matilda clasped him in her arms. "Why didst thou run from me, dear heart?" said she, breathing deep: "I could scarcely overtake thee." Heinrich wept. He pressed her to him. "Where is the river?" cried he in tears.—"Seest thou not its blue waves above us?" He looked up, and the blue river was flowing softly over their heads. "Where are we, dear Matilda?"—"With our Fathers."—"Shall we stay together?"—"Forever," answered she, pressing her lips to his, and so clasping him that she could not again quit hold. She put a wondrous secret Word in his mouth, and it pierced through all his being. He was about to repeat it, when his Grandfather called, and he awoke. He would have given his life to remember that Word.'

This image of Death, and of the River being the Sky in that other and eternal country, seems to us a fine and touching one: there is in it a trace of that simple sublimity, that soft still pathos, which are characteristics of Novalis, and doubtless the highest of his specially poetic gifts.

But on these, and what other gifts and deficiencies pertain to him, we can no farther insist: for now, after such multifarious quotations, and more or less stinted commentaries, we must consider our little enterprise in respect of Novalis to have reached its limits; to be, if not completed, concluded. Our reader has heard him largely; on a great variety of topics, selected and exhibited here in such manner as seemed the fittest for our object, and with a true wish on our part, that what little judgment was in the mean while to be formed of such a man might be a fair and honest one. Some of the passages we have translated will appear obscure; others, we hope, are not without symptoms of a wise and deep meaning;

the rest may excite wonder, which wonder again it will depend on each reader for himself, whether he turn to right account or to wrong account, whether he entertain as the parent of Knowledge, or as the daughter of Ignorance. For the great body of readers, we are aware, there can be little profit in Novalis, who rather employs our time than helps us to kill it; for such any farther study of him would be unadvisable. To others again, who prize Truth as the end of all reading, especially to that class who cultivate moral science as the development of purest and highest Truth, we can recommend the perusal and reperusal of Novalis with almost perfect confidence. If they feel, with us, that the most profitable employment any book can give them, is to study honestly some earnest, deep-minded, truth-loving Man, to work their way into his manner of thought, till they see the world with his eyes, feel as he felt and judge as he judged, neither believing nor denying, till they can in some measure so feel and judge,—then we may assert that few books known to us are more worthy of their attention than this. They will find it, if we mistake not, an unfathomed mine of philosophical ideas, where the keenest intellect may have occupation enough; and in such occupation, without looking farther, reward enough. All this, if the reader proceed on candid principles; if not, it will be all otherwise. To no man, so much as to Novalis is that famous motto applicable:

Leser, wie gefall' ich Dir?
Leser, wie gefällst Du mir?

Reader, how likest thou me?
Reader, how like I thee?

For the rest, it were but a false proceeding did we attempt any formal character of Novalis in this place; did we pretend with such means as ours to reduce that extraordinary nature under common formularies; and in few words sum-up the net total of his worth and worthlessness. We have repeatedly expressed our own imperfect knowledge of the matter, and our

entire despair of bringing even an approximate picture of it before readers so foreign to him. The kind words, 'amiable enthusiast,' 'poetic dreamer,' or the unkind ones, 'German mystic,' 'crackbrained rhapsodist,' are easily spoken and written; but would avail little in this instance. If we are not altogether mistaken, Novalis cannot be ranged under any one of these noted categories; but belongs to a higher and much less known one, the significance of which is perhaps also worth studying, at all events will not till after long study become clear to us.

Meanwhile let the reader accept some vague impressions of ours on this subject, since we have no fixed judgment to offer him. We might say, that the chief excellence we have remarked in Novalis is his to us truly wonderful subtlety of intellect; his power of intense abstraction, of pursuing the deepest and most evanescent ideas through their thousand complexities, as it were, with lynx vision, and to the very limits of human Thought. He was well skilled in mathematics, and, as we can easily believe, fond of that science; but his is a far finer species of endowment than any required in mathematics, where the mind, from the very beginning of *Euclid* to the end of *Laplace*, is assisted with visible symbols, with safe *implements* for thinking; nay, at least in what is called the higher mathematics, has often little more than a mechanical superintendence to exercise over these. This power of abstract meditation, when it is so sure and clear as we sometimes find it with Novalis, is a much higher and rarer one; its element is not mathematics, but that *Mathesis*, of which it has been said many a Great Calculist has not even a notion. In this power, truly, so far as logical and not moral power is concerned, lies the summary of all Philosophic talent: which talent, accordingly, we imagine Novalis to have possessed in a very high degree; in a higher degree than almost any other modern writer we have met with.

His chief fault, again, figures itself to us as a certain undue softness, a want of rapid energy; something which

we might term *passiveness* extending both over his mind and his character. There is a tenderness in Novalis, a purity, a clearness, almost as of a woman; but he has not, at least not at all in that degree, the emphasis and resolute force of a man. Thus, in his poetical delineations, as we complained above, he is too diluted and diffuse; not verbose properly; not so much abounding in superfluous words as in superfluous circumstances, which indeed is but a degree better. In his philosophical speculations, we feel as if, under a different form, the same fault were now and then manifested. Here again, he seems to us, in one sense, too languid, too passive. He *sits*, we might say, among the rich, fine, thousandfold combinations, which his mind almost of itself presents him; but, perhaps, he shows too little activity in the process, is too lax in separating the true from the doubtful, is not even at the trouble to express his truth with any laborious accuracy. With his stillness, with his deep love of Nature, his mild, lofty, spiritual tone of contemplation, he comes before us in a sort of Asiatic character, almost like our ideal of some antique Gymnosophist, and with the weakness as well as the strength of an Oriental. However, it should be remembered that his works both poetical and philosophical, as we now see them, appear under many disadvantages; altogether immature, and not as doctrines and delineations, but as the rude draught of such; in which, had they been completed, much was to have changed its shape, and this fault, with many others, might have disappeared. It may be, therefore, that this is only a superficial fault, or even only the appearance of a fault, and has its origin in these circumstances, and in our imperfect understanding of him. In personal and bodily habits, at least, Novalis appears to have been the opposite of inert; we hear expressly of his quickness and vehemence of movement.

In regard to the character of his genius, or rather perhaps of his literary significance, and the form under which he displayed his genius, Tieck thinks he may be likened to Dante.

'For him,' says he, 'it had become the most natural disposition to regard the commonest and nearest as a wonder, and the strange, the supernatural as something common; men's every-day life itself lay round him like a wondrous fable, and those regions which the most dream of or doubt of as of a thing distant, incomprehensible, were for him a beloved home. Thus did he, uncorrupted by examples, find out for himself a new method of delineation: and, in his multiplicity of meaning; in his view of Love, and his belief in Love, as at once his Instructor, his Wisdom, his Religion; in this, too, that a single grand incident of life, and one deep sorrow and bereavement grew to be the essence of his Poetry and Contemplation,—he, alone among the moderns, resembles the lofty Dante; and sings us, like him, an unfathomable mystic song, far different from that of many imitators, who think to put on mysticism and put it off, like a piece of dress.' Considering the tendency of his poetic endeavours, as well as the general spirit of his philosophy, this flattering comparison may turn out to be better founded than at first sight it seems to be. Nevertheless, were we required to illustrate Novalis in this way, which at all times must be a very loose one, we should incline rather to call him the German Pascal than the German Dante. Between Pascal and Novalis, a lover of such analogies might trace not a few points of resemblance. Both are of the purest, most affectionate moral nature; both of a high, fine, discursive intellect; both are mathematicians and naturalists, yet occupy themselves chiefly with Religion; nay, the best writings of both are left in the shape of 'Thoughts,' materials of a grand scheme, which each of them, with the views peculiar to his age, had planned, we may say, for the furtherance of Religion, and which neither of them lived to execute. Nor in all this would it fail to be carefully remarked, that Novalis was not the French but the *German* Pascal; and from the intellectual habits of the one and the other, many national contrasts and conclusions might be drawn; which we leave to those that have a taste for such parallels.

We have thus endeavoured to communicate some views not of what is vulgarly called, but of what *is* a German Mystic; to afford English readers a few glimpses into his actual household establishment, and show them by their own inspection how he lives and works. We have done it, moreover, not in the style of derision, which would have been so easy, but in that of serious inquiry, which seemed so much more profitable. For this we anticipate not censure, but thanks from our readers. Mysticism, whatever it may be, should, like other actually existing things, be understood in well-informed minds. We have observed, indeed, that the old-established laugh on this subject has been getting rather hollow of late; and seems as if erelong it would in a great measure die away. It appears to us that, in England, there is a distinct spirit of tolerant and sober investigation abroad in regard to this and other kindred matters; a persuasion, fast spreading wider and wider, that the plummet of French or Scotch logic, excellent, nay, indispensable as it is for surveying all coasts and harbours, will absolutely not sound the deep-seas of human Inquiry; and that many a Voltaire and Hume, well-gifted and highly meritorious men, were far wrong in reckoning that when their six-hundred fathoms were out, they had reached the bottom, which, as in the Atlantic, may lie unknown miles lower. Six-hundred fathoms is the longest, and a most valuable nautical line: but many men sound with six and fewer fathoms, and arrive at precisely the same conclusion.

'The day will come,' said Lichtenberg, in bitter irony, 'when the belief in God will be like that in nursery Spectres'; or, as Jean Paul has it, 'Of the World will be made a World-Machine, of the Æther a Gas, of God a Force, and of the Second-World—a Coffin.' We rather think, such a day will *not* come. At all events, while the battle is still waging, and that Coffin-and-Gas philosophy has not yet secured itself with tithes and penal statutes, let there be free scope for Mysticism, or whatever else honestly opposes it.

A fair field and no favour, and the right *will* prosper! 'Our present time,' says Jean Paul elsewhere, 'is indeed a criticising and critical time, hovering betwixt the wish and the inability to believe; a chaos of conflicting times: but even a chaotic world must have its centre, and revolution round that centre; there *is* no pure entire Confusion, but all such presupposes its opposite, before it can begin.'

SIGNS OF THE TIMES[1]

[1829]

It is no very good symptom either of nations or individuals, that they deal much in vaticination. Happy men are full of the present, for its bounty suffices them; and wise men also, for its duties engage them. Our grand business undoubtedly is, not to *see* what lies dimly at a distance, but to *do* what lies clearly at hand.

> Know'st thou *Yesterday*, its aim and reason;
> Work'st thou well *Today*, for worthy things?
> Calmly wait the *'Morrow's* hidden season,
> Need'st not fear what hap soe'er it brings.

But man's 'large discourse of reason' *will* look 'before and after'; and, impatient of the 'ignorant present time,' will indulge in anticipation far more than profits him. Seldom can the unhappy be persuaded that the evil of the day is sufficient for it; and the ambitious will not be content with present splendour, but paints yet more glorious triumphs, on the cloud-curtain of the future.

The case, however, is still worse with nations. For here the prophets are not one, but many; and each incites and confirms the other; so that the fatidical fury spreads wider and wider, till at last even Saul must join in it. For there is still a real magic in the action and reaction of minds on one another. The casual deliration of a few becomes, by this mysterious reverberation, the frenzy of many; men lose the use, not only of their understandings, but of their bodily senses; while the most obdurate unbelieving hearts melt, like

[1] Edinburgh Review, No. 98.

the rest, in the furnace where all are cast as victims and as fuel. It is grievous to think, that this noble omnipotence of Sympathy has been so rarely the Aaron's-rod of Truth and Virtue, and so often the Enchanter's-rod of Wickedness and Folly! No solitary miscreant, scarcely any solitary maniac, would venture on such actions and imaginations, as large communities of sane men have, in such circumstances, entertained as sound wisdom. Witness long scenes of the French Revolution, in these late times! Levity is no protection against such visitations, nor the utmost earnestness of character. The New-England Puritan burns witches, wrestles for months with the horrors of Satan's invisible world, and all ghastly phantasms, the daily and hourly precursors of the Last Day; then suddenly bethinks him that he is frantic, weeps bitterly, prays contritely, and the history of that gloomy season lies behind him like a frightful dream.

Old England too has had her share of such frenzies and panics; though happily, like other old maladies, they have grown milder of late: and since the days of Titus Oates have mostly passed without loss of men's lives; or indeed without much other loss than that of reason, for the time, in the sufferers. In this mitigated form, however, the distemper is of pretty regular recurrence; and may be reckoned on at intervals, like other natural visitations; so that reasonable men deal with it, as the Londoners do with their fogs,—go cautiously out into the groping crowd, and patiently carry lanterns at noon; knowing, by a well-grounded faith, that the sun is still in existence, and will one day reappear. How often have we heard, for the last fifty years, that the country was wrecked, and fast sinking; whereas, up to this date, the country is entire and afloat! The 'State in Danger' is a condition of things, which we have witnessed a hundred times; and as for the Church, it has seldom been out of 'danger' since we can remember it.

All men are aware that the present is a crisis of this sort; and why it has become so. The repeal of the Test Acts, and

then of the Catholic disabilities, has struck many of their admirers with an indescribable astonishment. Those things seemed fixed and immovable; deep as the foundations of the world; and lo, in a moment they have vanished, and their place knows them no more! Our worthy friends mistook the slumbering Leviathan for an island; often as they had been assured, that Intolerance was, and could be nothing but a Monster; and so, mooring under the lee, they had anchored comfortably in his scaly rind, thinking to take good cheer; as for some space they did. But now their Leviathan has suddenly dived under; and they can no longer be fastened in the stream of time; but must drift forward on it, even like the rest of the world: no very appalling fate, we think, could they but understand it; which, however, they will not yet, for a season. Their little island is gone; sunk deep amid confused eddies; and what is left worth caring for in the universe? What is it to them that the great continents of the earth are still standing; and the polestar and all our loadstars, in the heavens, still shining and eternal? Their cherished little haven is gone, and they will not be comforted! And therefore, day after day, in all manner of periodical or perennial publications, the most lugubrious predictions are sent forth. The King has virtually abdicated; the Church is a widow, without jointure; public principle is gone; private honesty is going; society, in short, is fast falling in pieces; and a time of unmixed evil is come on us.

At such a period, it was to be expected that the rage of prophecy should be more than usually excited. Accordingly, the Millennarians have come forth on the right hand, and the Millites on the left. The Fifth-monarchy men prophesy from the Bible, and the Utilitarians from Bentham. The one announces that the last of the seals is to be opened, positively, in the year 1860; and the other assures us that 'the greatest-happiness principle' is to make a heaven of earth, in a still shorter time. We know these symptoms too well, to think it necessary or safe to interfere with

them. Time and the hours will bring relief to all parties. The grand encourager of Delphic or other noises is—the Echo. Left to themselves, they will the sooner dissipate, and die away in space.

Meanwhile, we too admit that the present is an important time; as all present time necessarily is. The poorest Day that passes over us is the conflux of two Eternities; it is made up of currents that issue from the remotest Past, and flow onwards into the remotest Future. We were wise indeed, could we discern truly the signs of our own time; and by knowledge of its wants and advantages, wisely adjust our own position in it. Let us, instead of gazing idly into the obscure distance, look calmly around us, for a little, on the perplexed scene where we stand. Perhaps, on a more serious inspection, something of its perplexity will disappear, some of its distinctive characters and deeper tendencies more clearly reveal themselves; whereby our own relations to it, our own true aims and endeavours in it, may also become clearer.

Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practises the great art of adapting means to ends. Nothing is now done directly, or by hand; all is by rule and calculated contrivance. For the simplest operation, some helps and accompaniments, some cunning abbreviating process is in readiness. Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one. The shuttle drops from the fingers of the weaver, and falls into iron fingers that ply it faster. The sailor furls his sail, and lays down his oar; and bids a strong,

unwearied servant, on vaporous wings, bear him through the waters. Men have crossed oceans by steam; the Birmingham Fire-king has visited the fabulous East; and the genius of the Cape, were there any Camoens now to sing it, has again been alarmed, and with far stranger thunders than Gamas. There is no end to machinery. Even the horse is stripped of his harness, and finds a fleet fire-horse yoked in his stead. Nay, we have an artist that hatches chickens by steam; the very brood-hen is to be superseded! For all earthly, and for some unearthly purposes, we have machines and mechanic furtherances; for mincing our cabbages; for casting us into magnetic sleep. We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway; nothing can resist us. We war with rude Nature; and, by our resistless engines, come off always victorious, and loaded with spoils.

What wonderful accessions have thus been made, and are still making, to the physical power of mankind; how much better fed, clothed, lodged and, in all outward respects, accommodated men now are, or might be, by a given quantity of labour, is a grateful reflection which forces itself on every one. What changes, too, this addition of power is introducing into the Social System; how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor, will be a question for Political Economists, and a much more complex and important one than any they have yet engaged with.

But leaving these matters for the present, let us observe how the mechanical genius of our time has diffused itself into quite other provinces. Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. Here too nothing follows its spontaneous course, nothing is left to be accomplished by old natural methods. Everything has its cunningly devised implements, its prëestablished apparatus; it is not done by hand, but by

machinery. Thus we have machines for Education: Lancastrian machines; Hamiltonian machines; monitors, maps and emblems. Instruction, that mysterious communing of Wisdom with Ignorance, is no longer an indefinable tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitudes, and a perpetual variation of means and methods, to attain the same end; but a secure, universal, straightforward business, to be conducted in the gross, by proper mechanism, with such intellect as comes to hand. Then, we have Religious machines, of all imaginable varieties; the Bible-Society, professing a far higher and heavenly structure, is found, on inquiry, to be altogether an earthly contrivance: supported by collection of moneys, by fomenting of vanities, by puffing, intrigue and chicane; a machine for converting the Heathen. It is the same in all other departments. Has any man, or any society of men, a truth to speak, a piece of spiritual work to do; they can nowise proceed at once and with the mere natural organs, but must first call a public meeting, appoint committees, issue prospectuses, eat a public dinner; in a word, construct or borrow machinery, wherewith to speak it and do it. Without machinery they were hopeless, helpless; a colony of Hindoo weavers squatting in the heart of Lancashire. Mark, too, how every machine must have its moving power, in some of the great currents of society; every little sect among us, Unitarians, Utilitarians, Anabaptists, Phrenologists, must have its Periodical, its monthly or quarterly Magazine;—hanging out, like its windmill, into the *popularis aura*, to grind meal for the society.

With individuals, in like manner, natural strength avails little. No individual now hopes to accomplish the poorest enterprise single-handed and without mechanical aids; he must make interest with some existing corporation, and till his field with their oxen. In these days, more emphatically than ever, 'to live, signifies to unite with a party, or to make one.' Philosophy, Science, Art, Literature, all depend on machinery. No Newton, by silent meditation, now discovers

the system of the world from the falling of an apple; but some quite other than Newton stands in his Museum, his Scientific Institution, and behind whole batteries of retorts, digesters, and galvanic piles imperatively 'interrogates Nature,' —who, however, shows no haste to answer. In defect of Raphaels, and Angelos, and Mozarts, we have Royal Academies of Painting, Sculpture, Music; whereby the languishing spirit of Art may be strengthened, as by the more generous diet of a Public Kitchen. Literature, too, has its Paternoster-row mechanism, its Trade-dinners, its Editorial conclaves, and huge subterranean, puffing bellows; so that books are not only printed, but, in a great measure, written and sold, by machinery.

National culture, spiritual benefit of all sorts, is under the same management. No Queen Christina, in these times, needs to send for her Descartes; no King Frederick for his Voltaire, and painfully nourish him with pensions and flattery: any sovereign of taste, who wishes to enlighten his people, has only to impose a new tax, and with the proceeds establish Philosophic Institutes. Hence the Royal and Imperial Societies, the Bibliothèques, Glypothèques, Technothèques, which front us in all capital cities; like so many well-finished hives, to which it is expected the stray agencies of Wisdom will swarm of their own accord, and hive and make honey. In like manner, among ourselves, when it is thought that religion is declining, we have only to vote half-a-million's worth of bricks and mortar, and build new churches. In Ireland it seems they have gone still farther, having actually established a 'Penny-a-week Purgatory-Society'! Thus does the Genius of Mechanism stand by to help us in all difficulties and emergencies, and with his iron back bears all our burdens.

These things, which we state lightly enough here, are yet of deep import, and indicate a mighty change in our whole manner of existence. For the same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling.

Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavour, and in natural force, of any kind. Not for internal perfection, but for external combinations and arrangements, for institutions, constitutions,—for Mechanism of one sort or other, do they hope and struggle. Their whole efforts, attachments, opinions, turn on mechanism, and are of a mechanical character.

We may trace this tendency in all the great manifestations of our time; in its intellectual aspect, the studies it most favours and its manner of conducting them; in its practical aspects, its politics, arts, religion, morals; in the whole sources, and throughout the whole currents, of its spiritual, no less than its material activity.

Consider, for example, the state of Science generally, in Europe, at this period. It is admitted, on all sides, that the Metaphysical and Moral Sciences are falling into decay, while the Physical are engrossing, every day, more respect and attention. In most of the European nations there is now no such thing as a Science of Mind; only more or less advancement in the general science, or the special sciences, of matter. The French were the first to desert Metaphysics; and though they have lately affected to revive their school, it has yet no signs of vitality. The land of Malebranche, Pascal, Descartes and Fénelon, has now only its Cousins and Villemains; while, in the department of Physics, it reckons far other names. Among ourselves, the Philosophy of Mind, after a rickety infancy, which never reached the vigour of manhood, fell suddenly into decay, languished and finally died out, with its last amiable cultivator, Professor Stewart. In no nation but Germany has any decisive effort been made in psychological science; not to speak of any decisive result. The science of the age, in short, is physical, chemical, physiological; in all shapes mechanical. Our favourite Mathematics, the highly prized exponent of all these other sciences, has also become more and more mechanical. Excellence in what is called its higher departments depends less on natural genius than on acquired expertness in

wielding its machinery. Without undervaluing the wonderful results which a Lagrange or Laplace educes by means of it, we may remark, that their calculus, differential and integral, is little else than a more cunningly-constructed arithmetical mill; where the factors being put in, are, as it were, ground into the true product, under cover, and without other effort on our part than steady turning of the handle. We have more Mathematics than ever; but less Mathesis. Archimedes and Plato could not have read the *Mécanique Céleste*; but neither would the whole French Institute see aught in that saying, 'God geometrises!' but a sentimental rodomontade.

Nay, our whole Metaphysics itself, from Locke's time downwards, has been physical; not a spiritual philosophy, but a material one. The singular estimation in which his Essay was so long held as a scientific work (an estimation grounded, indeed, on the estimable character of the man) will one day be thought a curious indication of the spirit of these times. His whole doctrine is mechanical, in its aim and origin, in its method and its results. It is not a philosophy of the mind: it is a mere discussion concerning the origin of our consciousness, or ideas, or whatever else they are called; a genetic history of what we see *in* the mind. The grand secrets of Necessity and Freewill, of the Mind's vital or non-vital dependence on Matter, of our mysterious relations to Time and Space, to God, to the Universe, are not, in the faintest degree touched on in these inquiries; and seem not to have the smallest connexion with them.

The last class of our Scotch Metaphysicians had a dim notion that much of this was wrong; but they knew not how to right it. The school of Reid had also from the first taken a mechanical course, not seeing any other. The singular conclusions at which Hume, setting out from their admitted premises, was arriving, brought this school into being; they let loose Instinct, as an undiscriminating ban-dog, to guard them against these conclusions;—they tugged lustily at the logical chain by which Hume was so coldly towing them and

the world into bottomless abysses of Atheism and Fatalism. But the chain somehow snapped between them; and the issue has been that nobody now cares about either,—any more than about Hartley's, Darwin's, or Priestley's contemporaneous doings in England. Hartley's vibrations and vibratiuncles, one would think, were material and mechanical enough; but our Continental neighbours have gone still farther. One of their philosophers has lately discovered, that 'as the liver secretes bile, so does the brain secrete thought'; which astonishing discovery Dr. Cabanis, more lately still, in his *Rapports du Physique et du Morale de l'Homme*, has pushed into its minutest developments.

The metaphysical philosophy of this last inquirer is certainly no shadowy or unsubstantial one. He fairly lays open our moral structure with his dissecting-knives and real metal probes; and exhibits it to the inspection of mankind, by Leuwenhoek microscopes, and inflation with the anatomical blowpipe. Thought, he is inclined to hold, is still secreted by the brain; but then Poetry and Religion (and it is really worth knowing) are 'a product of the smaller intestines'! We have the greatest admiration for this learned doctor: with what scientific stoicism he walks through the land of wonders, unwondering; like a wise man through some huge, gaudy, imposing Vauxhall, whose fire-works, cascades and symphonies, the vulgar may enjoy and believe in,—but where he finds nothing real but the saltpetre, pasteboard and catgut. His book may be regarded as the ultimatum of mechanical metaphysics in our time; a remarkable realisation of what in Martinus Scriblerus was still only an idea, that 'as the jack had a meat-roasting quality, so had the body a thinking quality,'—upon the strength of which the Nurembergers were to build a wood-and-leather man, 'who should reason as well as most country parsons.' Vaucanson did indeed make a wooden duck, that seemed to eat and digest; but that bold scheme of the Nurembergers remained for a more modern virtuoso.

This condition of the two great departments of knowledge, —the outward, cultivated exclusively on mechanical principles; the inward, finally abandoned, because, cultivated on such principles, it is found to yield no result,—sufficiently indicates the intellectual bias of our time, its all-pervading disposition towards that line of inquiry. In fact, an inward persuasion has long been diffusing itself, and now and then even comes to utterance, That, except the external, there are no true sciences; that to the inward world (if there be any) our only conceivable road is through the outward; that, in short, what cannot be investigated and understood mechanically, cannot be investigated and understood at all. We advert the more particularly to these intellectual propensities, as to prominent symptoms of our age, because Opinion is at all times doubly related to Action, first as cause, then as effect; and the speculative tendency of any age will therefore give us, on the whole, the best indications of its practical tendency.

Nowhere, for example, is the deep, almost exclusive faith we have in Mechanism more visible than in the Politics of this time. Civil government does by its nature include much that is mechanical, and must be treated accordingly. We term it indeed, in ordinary language, the Machine of Society, and talk of it as the grand working wheel from which all private machines must derive, or to which they must adapt, their movements. Considered merely as a metaphor, all this is well enough; but here, as in so many other cases, the 'foam hardens itself into a shell,' and the shadow we have wantonly evoked stands terrible before us and will not depart at our bidding. Government includes much also that is not mechanical, and cannot be treated mechanically; of which latter truth, as appears to us, the political speculations and exertions of our time are taking less and less cognisance.

Nay, in the very outset, we might note the mighty interest taken in *mere political arrangements*, as itself the sign of a mechanical age. The whole discontent of Europe takes this direction. The deep, strong cry of all civilised nations,—a

cry which, every one now sees, must and will be answered, is: Give us a reform of Government! A good structure of legislation, a proper check upon the executive, a wise arrangement of the judiciary, is *all* that is wanting for human happiness. The Philosopher of this age is not a Socrates, a Plato, a Hooker, or Taylor, who inculcates on men the necessity and infinite worth of moral goodness, the great truth that our happiness depends on the mind which is within us, and not on the circumstances which are without us; but a Smith, a De Lolme, a Bentham, who chiefly inculcates the reverse of this,—that our happiness depends entirely on external circumstances; nay, that the strength and dignity of the mind within us is itself the creature and consequence of these. Were the laws, the government, in good order, all were well with us; the rest would care for itself! Dissentients from this opinion, expressed or implied, are now rarely to be met with; widely and angrily as men differ in its application, the principle is admitted by all.

Equally mechanical, and of equal simplicity, are the methods proposed by both parties for completing or securing this all-sufficient perfection of arrangement. It is no longer the moral, religious, spiritual condition of the people that is our concern, but their physical, practical, economical condition, as regulated by public laws. Thus is the Body-politic more than ever worshipped and tendered; but the Soul-politic less than ever. Love of country, in any high or generous sense, in any other than an almost animal sense, or mere habit, has little importance attached to it in such reforms, or in the opposition shown them. Men are to be guided only by their self-interests. Good government is a good balancing of these; and, except a keen eye and appetite for self-interest, requires no virtue in any quarter. To both parties it is emphatically a machine: to the discontented, a 'taxing-machine'; to the contented, a 'machine for securing property.' Its duties and its faults are not those of a father, but of an active parish-constable.

Thus it is by the mere condition of the machine, by preserving it untouched, or else by reconstructing it, and oiling it anew, that man's salvation as a social being is to be ensured and indefinitely promoted. Contrive the fabric of law aright, and without farther effort on your part, that divine spirit of Freedom, which all hearts venerate and long for, will of herself come to inhabit it; and under her healing wings every noxious influence will wither, every good and salutary one more and more expand. Nay, so devoted are we to this principle, and at the same time so curiously mechanical, that a new trade, specially grounded on it, has arisen among us, under the name of 'Codification,' or codemaking in the abstract; whereby any people, for a reasonable consideration, may be accommodated with a patent code;—more easily than curious individuals with patent breeches, for the people does *not* need to be measured first.

To us who live in the midst of all this, and see continually the faith, hope and practice of every one founded on Mechanism of one kind or other, it is apt to seem quite natural, and as if it could never have been otherwise. Nevertheless, if we recollect or reflect a little, we shall find both that it has been, and might again be otherwise. The domain of Mechanism,—meaning thereby political, ecclesiastical or other outward establishments,—was once considered as embracing, and we are persuaded can at any time embrace, but a limited portion of man's interests, and by no means the highest portion.

To speak a little pedantically, there is a science of *Dynamics* in man's fortunes and nature, as well as of *Mechanics*. There is a science which treats of, and practically addresses, the primary, unmodified forces and energies of man, the mysterious springs of Love, and Fear, and Wonder, of Enthusiasm, Poetry, Religion, all which have a truly vital and *infinite* character; as well as a science which practically addresses the finite, modified developments of these, when they take the

shape of immediate 'motives,' as hope of reward, or as fear of punishment.

Now it is certain, that in former times the wise men, the enlightened lovers of their kind, who appeared generally as Moralists, Poets or Priests, did, without neglecting the Mechanical province, deal chiefly with the Dynamical; applying themselves chiefly to regulate, increase and purify the inward primary powers of man; and fancying that herein lay the main difficulty, and the best service they could undertake. But a wide difference is manifest in our age. For the wise men, who now appear as Political Philosophers, deal exclusively with the Mechanical province; and occupying themselves in counting-up and estimating men's motives, strive by curious checking and balancing, and other adjustments of Profit and Loss, to guide them to their true advantage: while, unfortunately, those same 'motives' are so innumerable, and so variable in every individual, that no really useful conclusion can ever be drawn from their enumeration. But though Mechanism, wisely contrived, has done much for man in a social and moral point of view, we cannot be persuaded that it has ever been the chief source of his worth or happiness. Consider the great elements of human enjoyment, the attainments and possessions that exalt man's life to its present height, and see what part of these he owes to institutions, to Mechanism of any kind; and what to the instinctive, unbounded force, which Nature herself lent him, and still continues to him. Shall we say, for example, that Science and Art are indebted principally to the founders of Schools and Universities? Did not Science originate rather, and gain advancement, in the obscure closets of the Roger Bacons, Keplers, Newtons; in the workshops of the Fausts and the Watts; wherever, and in what guise soever Nature, from the first times downwards, had sent a gifted spirit upon the earth? Again, were Homer and Shakspeare members of any beneficed guild, or made Poets by means of it? Were Painting and Sculpture created by forethought, brought into

the world by institutions for that end? No; Science and Art have, from first to last, been the free gift of Nature; an unsolicited, unexpected gift; often even a fatal one. These things rose up, as it were, by spontaneous growth, in the free soil and sunshine of Nature. They were not planted or grafted, nor even greatly multiplied or improved by the culture or manuring of institutions. Generally speaking, they have derived only partial help from these; often enough have suffered damage. They made constitutions for themselves. They originated in the Dynamical nature of man, not in his Mechanical nature.

Or, to take an infinitely higher instance, that of the Christian Religion, which, under every theory of it, in the believing or unbelieving mind, must ever be regarded as the crowning glory, or rather the life and soul, of our whole modern culture: How did Christianity arise and spread abroad among men? Was it by institutions, and establishments and well-arranged systems of mechanism? Not so; on the contrary, in all past and existing institutions for those ends, its divine spirit has invariably been found to languish and decay. It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul; and was spread abroad by the 'preaching of the word,' by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it; and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines, and (as sun or star) will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man. Here again was no Mechanism; man's highest attainment was accomplished Dynamically, not Mechanically.

Nay, we will venture to say, that no high attainment, not even any far-extending movement among men, was ever accomplished otherwise. Strange as it may seem, if we read History with any degree of thoughtfulness, we shall find that the checks and balances of Profit and Loss have never been the grand agents with men; that they have never been roused into deep, thorough, all-pervading efforts by any computable prospect of Profit and Loss, for any visible, finite object; but

always for some invisible and infinite one. The Crusades took their rise in Religion; their visible object was, commercially speaking, worth nothing. It was the boundless Invisible world that was laid bare in the imaginations of those men; and in its burning light, the visible shrunk as a scroll. Not mechanical, nor produced by mechanical means, was this vast movement. No dining at Freemasons' Tavern, with the other long train of modern machinery; no cunning reconciliation of 'vested interests,' was required here: only the passionate voice of one man, the rapt soul looking through the eyes of one man; and rugged, steel-clad Europe trembled beneath his words, and followed him whither he listed. In later ages it was still the same. The Reformation had an invisible, mystic and ideal aim; the result was indeed to be embodied in external things; but its spirit, its worth, was internal, invisible, infinite. Our English Revolution too originated in Religion. Men did battle, in those old days, not for Purse-sake, but for Conscience-sake. Nay, in our own days, it is no way different. The French Revolution itself had something higher in it than cheap bread and a Habeas-corpus act. Here too was an Idea; a Dynamic, not a Mechanic force. It was a struggle, though a blind and at last an insane one, for the infinite, divine nature of Right, of Freedom, of Country.

Thus does man, in every age, vindicate, consciously or unconsciously, his celestial birthright. Thus does Nature hold on her wondrous, unquestionable course; and all our systems and theories are but so many froth-eddies or sand-banks, which from time to time she casts up, and washes away. When we can drain the Ocean into mill-ponds, and bottle-up the Force of Gravity, to be sold by retail, in gas jars; then may we hope to comprehend the infinitudes of man's soul under formulas of Profit and Loss; and rule over this too, as over a patent engine, by checks, and valves, and balances.

Nay, even with regard to Government itself, can it be necessary to remind any one that Freedom, without which

indeed all spiritual life is impossible, depends on infinitely more complex influences than either the extension or the curtailment of the 'democratic interest'? Who is there that, 'taking the high *priori* road,' shall point out what these influences are; what deep, subtle, inextricably entangled influences they have been and may be? For man is not the creature and product of Mechanism; but, in a far truer sense, its creator and producer: it is the noble People that makes the noble Government; rather than conversely. On the whole, Institutions are much; but they are not all. The freest and highest spirits of the world have often been found under strange outward circumstances: Saint Paul and his brother Apostles were politically slaves; Epictetus was personally one. Again, forget the influences of Chivalry and Religion, and ask: What countries produced Columbus and Las Casas? Or, descending from virtue and heroism to mere energy and spiritual talent: Cortes, Pizarro, Alba, Ximenes? The Spaniards of the sixteenth century were indisputably the noblest nation of Europe: yet they had the Inquisition and Philip II. They have the same government at this day; and are the lowest nation. The Dutch too have retained their old constitution; but no Siege of Leyden, no William the Silent, not even an Egmont or De Witt any longer appears among them. With ourselves also, where much has changed, effect has nowise followed cause as it should have done: two centuries ago, the Commons Speaker addressed Queen Elizabeth on bended knees, happy that the virago's foot did not even smite him; yet the people were then governed, not by a Castlereagh, but by a Burghley; they had their Shakspeare and Philip Sidney, where we have our Sheridan Knowles and Beau Brummel.

These and the like facts are so familiar, the truths which they preach so obvious, and have in all past times been so universally believed and acted on, that we should almost feel ashamed for repeating them; were it not that, on every hand, the memory of them seems to have passed away, or at best

died into a faint tradition, of no value as a practical principle. To judge by the loud clamour of our Constitution-builders, Statists, Economists, directors, creators, reformers of Public Societies; in a word, all manner of Mechanists, from the Cartwright up to the Code-maker; and by the nearly total silence of all Preachers and Teachers who should give a voice to Poetry, Religion and Morality, we might fancy either that man's Dynamical nature was, to all spiritual intents, extinct, or else so perfected that nothing more was to be made of it by the old means; and henceforth only in his Mechanical contrivances did any hope exist for him.

To define the limits of these two departments of man's activity, which work into one another, and by means of one another, so intricately and inseparably, were by its nature an impossible attempt. Their relative importance, even to the wisest mind, will vary in different times, according to the special wants and dispositions of those times. Meanwhile, it seems clear enough that only in the right coördination of the two, and the vigorous forwarding of *both*, does our true line of action lie. Undue cultivation of the inward or Dynamical province leads to idle, visionary, impracticable courses, and, especially in rude eras, to Superstition and Fanaticism, with their long train of baleful and well-known evils. Undue cultivation of the outward, again, though less immediately prejudicial, and even for the time productive of many palpable benefits, must, in the long-run, by destroying Moral Force, which is the parent of all other Force, prove not less certainly, and perhaps still more hopelessly, pernicious. This, we take it, is the grand characteristic of our age. By our skill in Mechanism, it has come to pass, that in the management of external things we excel all other ages; while in whatever respects the pure moral nature, in true dignity of soul and character, we are perhaps inferior to most civilised ages.

In fact, if we look deeper, we shall find that this faith in

Mechanism has now struck its roots down into man's most intimate, primary sources of conviction; and is thence sending up, over his whole life and activity, innumerable stems,—fruit-bearing and poison-bearing. The truth is, men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the Visible; or, to speak it in other words: This is not a Religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us. The infinite, absolute character of Virtue has passed into a finite, conditional one; it is no longer a worship of the Beautiful and Good; but a calculation of the Profitable. Worship, indeed, in any sense, is not recognised among us, or is mechanically explained into Fear of pain, or Hope of pleasure. Our true Deity is Mechanism. It has subdued external Nature for us, and we think it will do all other things. We are Giants in physical power: in a deeper than metaphorical sense, we are Titans, that strive, by heaping mountain on mountain, to conquer Heaven also.

The strong Mechanical character, so visible in the spiritual pursuits and methods of this age, may be traced much farther into the condition and prevailing disposition of our spiritual nature itself. Consider, for example, the general fashion of Intellect in this era. Intellect, the power man has of knowing and believing, is now nearly synonymous with Logic, or the mere power of arranging and communicating. Its implement is not Meditation, but Argument. 'Cause and effect' is almost the only category under which we look at, and work with, all Nature. Our first question with regard to any object is not, What is it? but, How is it? We are no longer instinctively driven to apprehend, and lay to heart, what is Good and Lovely, but rather to inquire, as onlookers, how it is produced, whence it comes, whither it goes. Our favourite Philosophers have no love and no hatred; they stand among us not to do, nor to create anything, but as a sort of Logic-mills, to grind out the true causes and effects of all that is done and created. To the eye of a Smith,

a Hume or a Constant, all is well that works quietly. An Order of Ignatius Loyola, a Presbyterianism of John Knox, a Wickliffe or a Henry the Eighth, are simply so many mechanical phenomena, caused or causing.

The *Euphuist* of our day differs much from his pleasant predecessors. An intellectual dapperling of these times boasts chiefly of his irresistible perspicacity, his 'dwelling in the daylight of truth,' and so forth; which, on examination, turns out to be a dwelling in the *rush*-light of 'closet-logic,' and a deep unconsciousness that there is any other light to dwell in or any other objects to survey with it. Wonder, indeed, is, on all hands, dying out: it is the sign of uncultivation to wonder. Speak to any small man of a high, majestic Reformation, of a high majestic Luther; and forthwith he sets about 'accounting' for it; how the 'circumstances of the time' called for such a character, and found him, we suppose, standing girt and road-ready, to do its errand; how the 'circumstances of the time' created, fashioned, floated him quietly along into the result; how, in short, this small man, had he been there, could have performed the like himself! For it is the 'force of circumstances' that does everything; the force of one man can do nothing. Now all this is grounded on little more than a metaphor. We figure Society as a 'Machine,' and that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten, little minds must be stronger than one great mind. Notable absurdity! For the plain truth, very plain, we think is, that minds are opposed to minds in quite a different way; and *one* man that has a higher Wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, not than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than *all* men that have it not; and stands among them with a quite ethereal, angelic power, as with a sword out of Heaven's own armory, sky-tempered, which no buckler, and no tower of brass, will finally withstand.

But to us, in these times, such considerations rarely occur.

We enjoy, we see nothing by direct vision; but only by reflection, and in anatomical dismemberment. Like Sir Hudibras, for every Why we must have a Wherefore. We have our little *theory* on all human and divine things. Poetry, the workings of genius itself, which in all times, with one or another meaning, has been called Inspiration, and held to be mysterious and inscrutable, is no longer without its scientific exposition. The building of the lofty rhyme is like any other masonry or bricklaying: we have theories of its rise, height, decline and fall,—which latter, it would seem, is now near, among all people. Of our 'Theories of Taste,' as they are called, wherein the deep, infinite, unspeakable Love of Wisdom and Beauty, which dwells in all men, is 'explained,' made mechanically visible, from 'Association' and the like, why should we say anything? Hume has written us a 'Natural History of Religion'; in which one Natural History all the the rest are included. Strangely too does the general feeling coincide with Hume's in this wonderful problem; for whether his 'Natural History' be the right one or not, that Religion must have a Natural History, all of us, cleric and laic, seem to be agreed. He indeed regards it as a Disease, we again as Health; so far there is a difference; but in our first principle we are at one.

To what extent theological Unbelief, we mean intellectual dissent from the Church, in its view of Holy Writ, prevails at this day, would be a highly important, were it not, under any circumstances, an almost impossible inquiry. But the Unbelief, which is of a still more fundamental character, every man may see prevailing, with scarcely any but the faintest contradiction, all around him; even in the Pulpit itself. Religion in most countries, more or less in every country, is no longer what it was, and should be,—a thousand-voiced psalm from the heart of Man to his invisible Father, the fountain of all Goodness, Beauty, Truth, and revealed in every revelation of these; but for the most part, a wise prudential feeling grounded on mere calculation; a matter, as all others

now are, of Expediency and Utility; whereby some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. Thus Religion too is Profit, a working for wages; not Reverence, but vulgar Hope or Fear. Many, we know, very many we hope, are still religious in a far different sense; were it not so, our case were too desperate: but to witness that such is the temper of the times, we take any calm observant man, who agrees or disagrees in our feeling on the matter, and ask him whether our *view* of it is not in general well-founded.

Literature too, if we consider it, gives similar testimony. At no former era has Literature, the printed communication of Thought, been of such importance as it is now. We often hear that the Church is in danger; and truly so it is,—in a danger it seems not to know of: for, with its tithes in the most perfect safety, its functions are becoming more and more superseded. The true Church of England, at this moment, lies in the Editors of its Newspapers. These preach to the people daily, weekly; admonishing kings themselves; advising peace or war, with an authority which only the first Reformers, and a long-past class of Popes, were possessed of; inflicting moral censure; imparting moral encouragement, consolation, edification; in all ways diligently 'administering the Discipline of the Church.' It may be said too, that in private disposition the new Preachers somewhat resemble the Mendicant Friars of old times: outwardly full of holy zeal; inwardly not without stratagem, and hunger for terrestrial things. But omitting this class, and the boundless host of watery personages who pipe, as they are able, on so many scrannel straws, let us look at the higher regions of Literature, where, if anywhere, the pure melodies of Poesy and Wisdom should be heard. Of natural talent there is no deficiency: one or two richly-endowed individuals even give us a superiority in this respect. But what is the song they sing? Is it a tone of the Memnon Statue, breathing music as the *light* first touches it? A 'liquid wisdom,' disclosing

to our sense the deep, infinite harmonies of Nature and man's soul? Alas, no! It is not a matin or vesper hymn to the Spirit of Beauty, but a fierce clashing of cymbals, and shouting of multitudes, as children pass through the fire to Moloch! Poetry itself has no eye for the Invisible. Beauty is no longer the god it worships, but some brute image of Strength; which we may call an idol, for true Strength is one and the same with Beauty, and its worship also is a hymn. The meek, silent Light can mould, create and purify all Nature; but the loud Whirlwind, the sign and product of Disunion, of Weakness, passes on, and is forgotten. How widely this veneration for the physically Strongest has spread itself through Literature, any one may judge who reads either criticism or poem. We praise a work, not as 'true,' but as 'strong'; our highest praise is that it has 'affected' us, has 'terrified' us. All this, it has been well observed, is the 'maximum of the Barbarous,' the symptom, not of vigorous refinement, but of luxurious corruption. It speaks much, too, for men's indestructible love of truth, that nothing of this kind will abide with them; that even the talent of a Byron cannot permanently seduce us into idol-worship; that he too, with all his wild siren charming, already begins to be disregarded and forgotten.

Again, with respect to our Moral condition: here also he who runs may read that the same physical, mechanical influences are everywhere busy. For the 'superior morality,' of which we hear so much, we too would desire to be thankful: at the same time, it were but blindness to deny that this 'superior morality' is properly rather an 'inferior criminality,' produced not by greater love of Virtue, but by greater perfection of Police; and of that far subtler and stronger Police, called Public Opinion. This last watches over us with its Argus eyes more keenly than ever; but the 'inward eye' seems heavy with sleep. Of any belief in invisible, divine things, we find as few traces in our Morality as elsewhere. It is by tangible, material considerations that we are guided, not

by inward and spiritual. Self-denial, the parent of all virtue, in any true sense of that word, has perhaps seldom been rarer: so rare is it, that the most, even in their abstract speculations, regard its existence as a chimera. Virtue is Pleasure, is Profit; no celestial, but an earthly thing. Virtuous men, Philanthropists, Martyrs are happy accidents; their 'taste' lies the right way! In all senses, we worship and follow after Power; which may be called a physical pursuit. No man now loves Truth, as Truth must be loved, with an infinite love; but only with a finite love, and as it were *par amours*. Nay, properly speaking, he does not *believe* and know it, but only '*thinks*' it, and that 'there is every probability!' He preaches it aloud, and rushes courageously forth with it,—if there is a multitude huzzaing at his back; yet ever keeps looking over his shoulder, and the instant the huzzaing languishes, he too stops short.

In fact, what morality we have takes the shape of Ambition, of 'Honour': beyond money and money's worth, our only rational blessedness is Popularity. It were but a fool's trick to die for conscience. Only for 'character,' by duel, or in case of extremity, by suicide, is the wise man bound to die. By arguing on the 'force of circumstances,' we have argued away all force from ourselves; and stand leashed together, uniform in dress and movement, like the rowers of some boundless galley. This and that may be right and true; *but* we must not do it. Wonderful 'Force of Public Opinion'! We must act and walk in all points as it prescribes; follow the traffic it bids us, realise the sum of money, the degree of 'influence' it expects of us, *or* we shall be lightly esteemed; certain mouthfuls of articulate wind will be blown at us, and this what mortal courage can front? Thus, while civil liberty is more and more secured to us, our moral liberty is all but lost. Practically considered, our creed is Fatalism; and, free in hand and foot, we are shackled in heart and soul with far straiter than feudal chains. Truly may we say, with the Philosopher, 'the deep meaning of the

Laws of Mechanism lies heavy on us'; and in the closet, in the marketplace, in the temple, by the social hearth, encumbers the whole movements of our mind, and over our noblest faculties is spreading a nightmare sleep.

These dark features, we are aware, belong more or less to other ages, as well as to ours. This faith in Mechanism, in the all-importance of physical things, is in every age the common refuge of Weakness and blind Discontent; of all who believe, as many will ever do, that man's true good lies without him, not within. We are aware also, that, as applied to ourselves in all their aggravation, they form but half a picture; that in the whole picture there are bright lights as well as gloomy shadows. If we here dwell chiefly on the latter, let us not be blamed: it is in general more profitable to reckon up our defects than to boast of our attainments.

Neither, with all these evils more or less clearly before us, have we at any time despaired of the fortunes of society. Despair, or even despondency, in that respect, appears to us, in all cases, a groundless feeling. We have a faith in the imperishable dignity of man; in the high vocation to which, throughout this his earthly history, he has been appointed. However it may be with individual nations, whatever melancholic speculators may assert, it seems a well-ascertained fact, that in all times, reckoning even from those of the Heraclides and Pelasgi, the happiness and greatness of mankind at large have been continually progressive. Doubtless this age also is advancing. Its very unrest, its ceaseless activity, its discontent contains matter of promise. Knowledge, education are opening the eyes of the humblest; are increasing the number of thinking minds without limit. This is as it should be; for not in turning back, not in resisting, but only in resolutely struggling forward, does our life consist.

Nay, after all, our spiritual maladies are but of Opinion; we are but fettered by chains of our own forging, and which ourselves also can rend asunder. This deep, paralysed sub-

jection to physical objects comes not from Nature, but from our own unwise mode of *viewing* Nature. Neither can we understand that man wants, at this hour, any faculty of heart, soul or body, that ever belonged to him. 'He, who has been born, has been a First Man'; has had lying before his young eyes, and as yet unhardened into scientific shapes, a world as plastic, infinite, divine, as lay before the eyes of Adam himself. If Mechanism, like some glass bell, encircles and imprisons us; if the soul looks forth on a fair heavenly country which it cannot reach, and pines, and in its scanty atmosphere is ready to perish,—yet the bell is but of glass; 'one bold stroke to break the bell in pieces, and thou art delivered!' Not the invisible world is wanting, for it dwells in man's soul, and this last is still here. Are the solemn temples, in which the Divinity was once visibly revealed among us, crumbling away? We can repair them, we can rebuild them. The wisdom, the heroic worth of our forefathers, which we have lost, we can recover. That admiration of old nobleness, which now so often shows itself as a faint *dilettantism*, will one day become a generous emulation, and man may again be all that he has been, and more than he has been. Nor are these the mere daydreams of fancy; they are clear possibilities; nay, in this time they are even assuming the character of hopes. Indications we do see in other countries and in our own, signs infinitely cheering to us, that Mechanism is not always to be our hard taskmaster, but one day to be our pliant, all-ministering servant; that a new and brighter spiritual era is slowly evolving itself for all men. But on these things our present course forbids us to enter.

Meanwhile, that great outward changes are in progress can be doubtful to no one. The time is sick and out of joint. Many things have reached their height; and it is a wise adage that tells us, 'the darkest hour is nearest the dawn.' Wherever we can gather indication of the public thought, whether from printed books, as in France or Germany, or from Carbonari rebellions and other political tumults, as in Spain, Portugal,

Italy and Greece, the voice it utters is the same. The thinking minds of all nations call for change. There is a deep-lying struggle in the whole fabric of society; a boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old. The French Revolution, as is now visible enough, was not the parent of this mighty movement, but its offspring. Those two hostile influences, which always exist in human things, and on the constant intercommunion of which depends their health and safety, had lain in separate masses, accumulating through generations, and France was the scene of their fiercest explosion; but the final issue was not unfolded in that country: nay, it is not yet anywhere unfolded. Political freedom is hitherto the object of these efforts; but they will not and cannot stop there. It is towards a higher freedom than mere freedom from oppression by his fellow-mortal, that man dimly aims. Of this higher, heavenly freedom, which is 'man's reasonable service,' all his noble institutions, his faithful endeavours and loftiest attainments, are but the body, and more and more approximated emblem.

On the whole, as this wondrous planet, Earth, is journeying with its fellows through infinite Space, so are the wondrous destinies embarked on it journeying through infinite Time, under a higher guidance than ours. For the present, as our astronomy informs us, its path lies towards *Hercules*, the constellation of *Physical Power*: but that is not our most pressing concern. Go where it will, the deep HEAVEN will be around it. Therein let us have hope and sure faith. To reform a world, to reform a nation, no wise man will undertake; and all but foolish men know, that the only solid, though a far slower reformation, is what each begins and perfects on *himself*.

ON HISTORY[1]

[1830]

Clio was figured by the ancients as the eldest daughter of Memory, and chief of the Muses; which dignity, whether we regard the essential qualities of her art, or its practice and acceptance among men, we shall still find to have been fitly bestowed. History, as it lies at the root of all science, is also the first distinct product of man's spiritual nature; his earliest expression of what can be called Thought. It is a looking both before and after; as, indeed, the coming Time already waits, unseen, yet definitely shaped, predetermined and inevitable, in the Time come; and only by the combination of both is the meaning of either completed. The Sibylline Books, though old, are not the oldest. Some nations have prophecy, some have not: but of all mankind, there is no tribe so rude that it has not attempted History, though several have not arithmetic enough to count Five. History has been written with quipo-threads, with feather-pictures, with wampum-belts; still oftener with earth-mounds and monumental stone-heaps, whether as pyramid or cairn; for the Celt and the Copt, the Red man as well as the White, lives between two eternities, and warring against Oblivion, he would fain unite himself in clear conscious relation, as in dim unconscious relation he is already united, with the whole Future, and the whole Past.

A talent for History may be said to be born with us, as our chief inheritance. In a certain sense all men are historians. Is not every memory written quite full with Annals,

[1] Fraser's Magazine, No. 10.

wherein joy and mourning, conquest and loss manifoldly alternate; and, with or without philosophy, the whole fortunes of one little inward Kingdom, and all its politics, foreign and domestic, stand ineffaceably recorded? Our very speech is curiously historical. Most men, you may observe, speak only to narrate; not in imparting what they have thought, which indeed were often a very small matter, but in exhibiting what they have undergone or seen, which is a quite unlimited one, do talkers dilate. Cut us off from Narrative, how would the stream of conversation, even among the wisest, languish into detached handfuls, and among the foolish utterly evaporate! Thus, as we do nothing but enact History, we say little but recite it nay, rather, in that widest sense, our whole spiritual life is built thereon. For, strictly considered, what is all Knowledge too but recorded Experience, and a product of History; of which, therefore, Reasoning and Belief, no less than Action and Passion, are essential materials?

Under a limited, and the only practicable shape, History proper, that part of History which treats of remarkable action, has, in all modern as well as ancient times, ranked among the highest arts, and perhaps never stood higher than in these times of ours. For whereas, of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown; and her office was but as that of a Minstrel and Story-teller, she has now farther become a School-mistress, and professes to instruct in gratifying. Whether, with the stateliness of that venerable character, she may not have taken up something of its austerity and frigidity; whether in the logical terseness of a Hume or Robertson, the graceful ease and gay pictorial heartiness of a Herodotus or Froissart may not be wanting, is not the question for us here. Enough that all learners, all inquiring minds of every order, are gathered round her footstool, and reverently pondering her lessons, as the true basis of Wisdom. Poetry, Divinity, Politics, Physics, have each their adherents and adversaries;

each little guild supporting a defensive and offensive war for its own special domain; while the domain of History is as a Free Emporium, where all these belligerents peaceably meet and furnish themselves; and Sentimentalist and Utilitarian, Sceptic and Theologian, with one voice advise us: Examine History, for it is 'Philosophy teaching by Experience.'

Far be it from us to disparage such teaching, the very attempt at which must be precious. Neither shall we too rigidly inquire: How much it has hitherto profited? Whether most of what little practical wisdom men have, has come from study of professed History, or from other less boasted sources, whereby, as matters now stand, a Marlborough may become great in the world's business, with no History save what he derives from Shakspeare's Plays? Nay, whether in that same teaching by Experience, historical Philosophy has yet properly deciphered the first element of all science in this kind: What the aim and significance of that wondrous changeful Life it investigates and paints may be? Whence the course of man's destinies in this Earth originated, and whither they are tending? Or, indeed, if they have any course and tendency, are really guided forward by an unseen mysterious Wisdom, or only circle in blind mazes without recognisable guidance? Which questions, altogether fundamental, one might think, in any Philosophy of History, have, since the era when Monkish Annalists were wont to answer them by the long-ago extinguished light of their Missal and Breviary, been by most philosophical Historians only glanced at dubiously and from afar; by many, not so much as glanced at.

The truth is, two difficulties, never wholly surmountable, lie in the way. Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, the Philosophy has to be in readiness, the Experience must be gathered and intelligibly recorded. Now, overlooking the former consideration, and with regard only to the latter, let any one who has examined the current of human affairs, and how intricate, perplexed, unfathomable, even when seen into with our own eyes, are their thousandfold blending

movements, say whether the true representing of it is easy or impossible. Social Life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute society; History is the essence of innumerable Biographies. But if one Biography, nay, our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remains in so many points unintelligible to us; how much more must these million, the very facts of which, to say nothing of the purport of them, we know not, and cannot know!

Neither will it adequately avail us to assert that the general inward condition of Life is the same in all ages; and that only the remarkable deviations from the common endowment and common lot, and the more important variations which the outward figure of Life has from time to time undergone, deserve memory and record. The inward condition of Life, it may rather be affirmed, the conscious or half-conscious aim of mankind, so far as men are not mere digesting-machines, is the same in no two ages; neither are the more important outward variations easy to fix on, or always well capable of representation. Which was the greatest innovator, which was the more important personage in man's history, he who first led armies over the Alps, and gained the victories of Cannæ and Thrasymene; or the nameless boor who first hammered out for himself an iron spade? When the oak-tree is felled, the whole forest echoes with it; but a hundred acorns are planted silently by some unnoticed breeze. Battles and war-tumults, which for the time din every ear, and with joy or terror intoxicate every heart, pass away like tavern-brawls; and, except some few Marathons and Morgartens, are remembered by accident, not by desert. Laws themselves, political Constitutions, are not our Life, but only the house wherein our Life is led: nay, they are but the bare walls of the house: all whose essential furniture, the inventions and traditions, and daily habits that regulate and support our existence, are the work not of Dracos and Hampdens, but of Phœnician mariners, of Italian masons

and Saxon metallurgists, of philosophers, alchymists, prophets, and all the long-forgotten train of artists and artisans; who from the first have been jointly teaching us how to think and how to act, how to rule over spiritual and over physical Nature. Well may we say that of our History the more important part is lost without recovery; and,—as thanksgivings were once wont to be offered 'for unrecognised mercies,'—look with reverence into the dark untenanted places of the Past, where, in formless oblivion, our chief benefactors, with all their sedulous endeavours, but not with the fruit of these, lie entombed.

So imperfect is that same Experience, by which Philosophy is to teach. Nay, even with regard to those occurrences which do stand recorded, which, at their origin have seemed worthy of record, and the summary of which constitutes what we now call History, is not our understanding of them altogether incomplete; is it even possible to represent them as they were? The old story of Sir Walter Raleigh's looking from his prison-window, on some street tumult, which afterwards three witnesses reported in three different ways, himself differing from them all, is still a true lesson for us. Consider how it is that historical documents and records originate; even honest records, where the reporters were unbiased by personal regard; a case which, were nothing more wanted, must ever be among the rarest. The real leading features of a historical Transaction, those movements that essentially characterise it, and alone deserve to be recorded, are nowise the foremost to be noted. At first, among the various witnesses, who are also parties interested, there is only vague wonder, and fear or hope, and the noise of Rumour's thousand tongues; till, after a season, the conflict of testimonies has subsided into some general issue; and then it is settled, by majority of votes, that such and such a 'Crossing of the Rubicon,' an 'Impeachment of Strafford,' a 'Convocation of the Notables,' are epochs in the world's history, cardinal points on which grand world-revolutions have hinged.

Suppose, however, that the majority of votes was all wrong; that the real cardinal points lay far deeper: and had been passed over unnoticed, because no Seer, but only mere Onlookers, chanced to be there! Our clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour; but no hammer in the Horologe of Time peals through the universe when there is a change from Era to Era. Men understand not what is among their hands: as calmness is the characteristic of strength, so the weightiest causes may be most silent. It is, in no case, the real historical Transaction, but only some more or less plausible scheme and theory of the Transaction, or the harmonised result of many such schemes, each varying from the other and all varying from truth, that we can ever hope to behold.

Nay, were our faculty of insight into passing things never so complete, there is still a fatal discrepancy between our manner of observing these, and their manner of occurring. The most gifted man can observe, still more can record, only the *series* of his own impressions: his observation, therefore, to say nothing of its other imperfections, must be *successive*, while the things done were often *simultaneous*; the things done were not a series, but a group. It is not in acted, as it is in written History: actual events are nowise so simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new: it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable elements. And this Chaos, boundless as the habitation and duration of man, unfathomable as the soul and destiny of man, is what the historian will depict, and scientifically gauge, we may say, by threading it with single lines of a few ells in length! For as all Action is, by its nature, to be figured as extended in breadth and in depth, as well as in length; that is to say, is based on Passion and Mystery, if we investigate its origin; and spreads

abroad on all hands, modifying and modified; as well as advances towards completion,—so all Narrative is, by its nature, of only one dimension; only travels forward towards one, or towards successive points: Narrative is *linear*, Action is *solid*. Alas for our 'chains,' or chainlets, of 'causes and effects,' which we so assiduously track through certain hand-breadths of years and square miles, when the whole is a broad, deep Immensity, and each atom is 'chained' and complected with all! Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose History is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it,—were the All-wisdom needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere earthly Historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for Omniscience than for human science; and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret; or at most, in reverent Faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him, whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom History indeed reveals, but only all History, and in Eternity, will clearly reveal.

Such considerations truly were of small profit, did they, instead of teaching us vigilance and reverent humility in our inquiries into History, abate our esteem for them, or discourage us from unweariedly prosecuting them. Let us search more and more into the Past; let all men explore it, as the true fountain of knowledge; by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at. For though the whole meaning lies far beyond our ken; yet in that complex Manuscript, covered over with formless inextricably-entangled unknown characters,—nay, which is a *Palimpsest*, and had once prophetic writing, still dimly legible there,—some letters, some words, may be deciphered; and if no complete Philosophy,

here and there an intelligible precept, available in practice, be gathered: well understanding, in the mean while, that it is only a little portion we have deciphered; that much still remains to be interpreted; that History is a real Prophetic Manuscript, and can be fully interpreted by no man.

But the Artist in History may be distinguished from the Artisan in History; for here, as in all other provinces, there are Artists and Artisans; men who labour mechanically in a department, without eye for the Whole, not feeling that there is a Whole; and men who inform and ennoble the humblest department with an Idea of the Whole, and habitually know that only in the Whole is the Partial to be truly discerned. The proceedings and the duties of these two, in regard to History, must be altogether different. Not, indeed, that each has not a real worth, in his several degree. The simple husbandman can till his field, and by knowledge he has gained of its soil, sow it with the fit grain, though the deep rocks and central fires are unknown to him: his little crop hangs under and over the firmament of stars, and sails through whole untracked celestial spaces, between Aries and Libra; nevertheless it ripens for him in due season, and he gathers it safe into his barn. As a husbandman he is blameless in disregarding those higher wonders; but as a thinker, and faithful inquirer into Nature, he were wrong. So likewise is it with the Historian, who examines some special aspect of History; and from this or that combination of circumstances, political, moral, economical, and the issues it has led to, infers that such and such properties belong to human society, and that the like circumstances will produce the like issue; which inference, if other trials confirm it, must be held true and practically valuable. He is wrong only, and an artisan, when he fancies that these properties, discovered or discoverable, exhaust the matter: and sees not, at every step, that it is inexhaustible.

However, that class of cause-and-effect speculators, with

whom no wonder would remain wonderful, but all things in Heaven and Earth must be computed and 'accounted for'; and even the Unknown, the Infinite in man's Life, had under the words *enthusiasm*, *superstition*, *spirit of the age* and so forth, obtained, as it were, an algebraical symbol and given value,—have now wellnigh played their part in European culture; and may be considered, as in most countries, even in England itself where they linger the latest, verging towards extinction. He who reads the inscrutable Book of Nature as if it were a Merchant's Ledger, is justly suspected of having never seen that Book, but only some school Synopsis thereof; from which, if taken for the real Book, more error than insight is to be derived.

Doubtless also, it is with a growing feeling of the infinite nature of History, that in these times, the old principle, division of labour, has been so widely applied to it. The Political Historian, once almost the sole cultivator of History, has now found various associates, who strive to elucidate other phases of human Life; of which, as hinted above, the political conditions it is passed under are but one, and though the primary, perhaps not the most important, of the many outward arrangements. Of this Historian himself, moreover, in his own special department, new and higher things are beginning to be expected. From of old, it was too often to be reproachfully observed of him, that he dwelt with disproportionate fondness in Senate-houses, in Battle-fields, nay, even in Kings' Antechambers; forgetting, that far away from such scenes, the mighty tide of Thought and Action was still rolling on its wondrous course, in gloom and brightness; and in its thousand remote valleys, a whole world of Existence, with or without an earthly sun of Happiness to warm it, with or without a heavenly sun of Holiness to purify and sanctify it, was blossoming and fading, whether the 'famous victory' were won or lost. The time seems coming when much of this must be amended; and he who sees no world but that of courts and camps; and writes only how soldiers

were drilled and shot, and how this ministerial conjuror outconjured that other, and then guided, or at least held, something which he called the rudder of Government, but which was rather the spigot of Taxation, wherewith, in place of steering, he could tap, and the more cunningly the nearer the lees,—will pass for a more or less instructive Gazetteer, but will no longer be called a Historian.

However, the Political Historian, were his work performed with all conceivable perfection, can accomplish but a part, and still leaves room for numerous fellow-labourers. Foremost among these comes the Ecclesiastical Historian; endeavouring, with catholic or sectarian view, to trace the progress of the Church; of that portion of the social establishments, which respects our religious condition; as the other portion does our civil, or rather, in the long-run, our economical condition. Rightly conducted, this department were undoubtedly the more important of the two; inasmuch as it concerns us more to understand how man's moral well-being had been and might be promoted, than to understand in the like sort his physical well-being; which latter is ultimately the aim of all Political arrangements. For the physically happiest is simply the safest, the strongest; and, in all conditions of Government, Power (whether of wealth as in these days, or of arms and adherents as in old days) is the only outward emblem and purchase-money of Good. True Good, however, unless we reckon Pleasure synonymous with it, is said to be rarely, or rather never, offered for sale in the market where that coin passes current. So that, for man's true advantage, not the outward condition of his life, but the inward and spiritual, is of prime influence; not the form of Government he lives under, and the power he can accumulate there, but the Church he is a member of, and the degree of moral elevation he can acquire by means of its instruction. Church History, then, did it speak wisely, would have momentous secrets to teach us: nay, in its highest degree, it were a sort of continued Holy Writ; our

Sacred Books being, indeed, only a History of the primeval Church, as it first arose in man's soul, and symbolically embodied itself in his external life. How far our actual Church Historians fall below such unattainable standards, nay, below quite attainable approximations thereto, we need not point out. Of the Ecclesiastical Historian we have to complain, as we did of his Political fellow-craftsman, that his inquiries turn rather on the outward mechanism, the mere hulls and superficial accidents of the object, than on the object itself: as if the Church lay in Bishops' Chapter-houses, and Ecumenic Council-halls, and Cardinals' Conclaves, and not far more in the hearts of Believing Men; in whose walk and conversation, as influenced thereby, its chief manifestations were to be looked for, and its progress or decline ascertained. The History of the Church is a History of the Invisible as well as of the Visible Church; which latter, if disjoined from the former, is but a vacant edifice; gilded, it may be, and overhung with old votive gifts, yet useless, nay, pestilentially unclean; to write whose history is less important than to forward its downfall.

Of a less ambitious character are the Histories that relate to special separate provinces of human Action; to Sciences, Practical Arts, Institutions and the like; matters which do not imply an epitome of man's whole interest and form of life; but wherein, though each is still connected with all, the spirit of each, at least its material results, may be in some degree evolved without so strict a reference to that of the others. Highest in dignity and difficulty, under this head, would be our histories of Philosophy, of man's opinions and theories respecting the nature of his Being, and relations to the Universe Visible and Invisible: which History, indeed, were it fitly treated, or fit for right treatment, would be a province of Church History; the logical or dogmatical province thereof; for Philosophy, in its true sense, is or should be the soul, of which Religion, Worship is the body; in the healthy state of things the Philosopher and Priest

were one and the same. But Philosophy itself is far enough from wearing this character; neither have its Historians been men, generally speaking, that could in the smallest degree approximate it thereto. Scarcely since the rude era of the Magi and Druids has that same healthy identification of Priest and Philosopher had place in any country: but rather the worship of divine things, and the scientific investigation of divine things, have been in quite different hands, their relations not friendly but hostile. Neither have the Brückers and Bühles, to say nothing of the many unhappy Enfields who have treated of that latter department, been more than barren reporters, often unintelligent and unintelligible reporters, of the doctrine uttered; without force to discover how the doctrine originated, or what reference it bore to its time and country, to the spiritual position of mankind there and then. Nay, such a task did not perhaps lie before them, as a thing to be attempted.

Art also and Literature are intimately blended with Religion; as it were, outworks and abutments, by which that highest pinnacle in our inward world gradually connects itself with the general level, and becomes accessible therefrom. He who should write a proper History of Poetry, would depict for us the successive Revelations which man had obtained of the Spirit of Nature; under what aspects he had caught and endeavoured to body forth some glimpse of that unspeakable Beauty, which in its highest clearness is Religion, is the inspiration of a Prophet, yet in one or the other degree must inspire every true Singer, were his theme never so humble. We should see by what steps men had ascended to the Temple; how near they had approached; by what ill hap they had, for long periods, turned away from it, and grovelled on the plain with no music in the air, or blindly struggled towards other heights. That among all our Eichhorns and Wartons there is no such Historian, must be too clear to every one. Nevertheless let us not despair of far nearer approaches to that excellence. Above all, let us

keep the Ideal of it ever in our eye; for thereby alone have we even a chance to reach it.

Our histories of Laws and Constitutions, wherein many a Montesquieu and Hallam has laboured with acceptance, are of a much simpler nature; yet deep enough if thoroughly investigated; and useful, when authentic, even with little depth. Then we have Histories of Medicine, of Mathematics, of Astronomy, Commerce, Chivalry, Monkery; and Goguets and Beckmanns have come forward with what might be the most bountiful contribution of all, a History of Inventions. Of all which sorts, and many more not here enumerated, not yet devised and put in practice, the merit and the proper scheme may, in our present limits, require no exposition.

In this manner, though, as above remarked, all Action is extended three ways, and the general sum of human Action is a whole Universe, with all limits of it unknown, does History strive by running path after path, through the Impassable, in manifold directions and intersections, to secure for us some oversight of the Whole; in which endeavour, if each Historian look well around him from his path, tracking it out with the *eye*, not, as is more common, with the *nose*, she may at last prove not altogether unsuccessful. Praying only that increased division of labour do not here, as elsewhere, aggravate our already strong Mechanical tendencies, so that in the manual dexterity for parts we lose all command over the whole, and the hope of any Philosophy of History be farther off than ever,—let us all wish her great and greater success.

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER[1]

[1830]

It is some six years since the name 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter' was first printed with English types; and some six-and-forty since it has stood emblazoned and illuminated on all true literary Indicators among the Germans; a fact which, if we consider the history of many a Kotzebue and Chateaubriand, within that period, may confirm the old doctrine, that the best celebrity does not always spread the fastest; but rather, quite contrariwise, that as blown bladders are far more easily carried than metallic masses, though gold ones, of equal bulk, so the Playwright, Poetaster, Philosophe, will often pass triumphantly beyond seas, while the Poet and Philosopher abide quietly at home. Such is the order of Nature: a Spurzheim flies from Vienna to Paris and London within the year; a Kant, slowly advancing, may perhaps reach us from Königsberg within the century: Newton, merely to cross the narrow Channel, required fifty years, Shakspeare, again, three times as many. It is true, there are examples of an opposite sort; now and then, by some rare chance, a Goethe, a Cervantes, will occur in literature, and Kings may laugh over *Don Quixote* while it is yet unfinished, and scenes from *Werter* be painted on Chinese tea-cups while the author is still a stripling. These, however, are not the rule, but the exceptions; nay, rightly interpreted, the exceptions which confirm it. In general,

[1] Foreign Review, No. 9.—*Wahrheit aus Jean Pauls Leben* (Biography of Jean Paul). 1stes, 2tes, 3tes Bändchen. Breslau, 1826, '27, '28.

that sudden tumultuous popularity comes more from partial delirium on both sides than from clear insight; and is of evil omen to all concerned with it. How many loud Bacchus-festivals of this sort have we seen prove to be pseudo-Bacchanalia, and end in directly the inverse of Orgies! Drawn by his team of lions, the jolly god advances as a real god, with all his thyrsi, cymbals, phallophori and Mænadic women; the air, the earth is giddy with their clangour, their Evohes: but, alas, in a little while, the lion-team shows long ears, and becomes too clearly an ass-team in lion-skins; the Mænads wheel round in amazement; and then the jolly god, dragged from his chariot, is trodden into the kennels as a drunk mortal.

That no such apotheosis was appointed for Richter in his own country, or is now to be anticipated in any other, we cannot but regard as a natural and nowise unfortunate circumstance. What divinity lies in him requires a calmer worship, and from quite another class of worshippers. Neither, in spite of that forty-years abeyance, shall we accuse England of any uncommon blindness towards him: nay, taking all things into account, we should rather consider his actual footing among us as evincing not only an increased rapidity in literary intercourse, but an intrinsic improvement in the manner and objects of it. Our feeling of foreign excellence, we hope, must be becoming truer; our Insular taste must be opening more and more into a European one. For Richter is by no means a man whose merits, like his singularities, force themselves on the general eye; indeed, without great patience, and some considerable catholicism of disposition, no reader is likely to prosper much with him. He has a fine, high, altogether unusual talent; and a manner of expressing it perhaps still more unusual. He is a Humorist heartily and throughout; not only in low provinces of thought, where this is more common, but in the loftiest provinces, where it is well-nigh unexampled; and thus, in wild sport, 'playing bowls with the sun and moon,'

he fashions the strangest ideal world, which at first glance looks no better than a chaos.

The Germans themselves find much to bear with in him; and for readers of any other nation, he is involved in almost boundless complexity; a mighty maze, indeed, but in which the plan, or traces of a plan, are nowhere visible. Far from appreciating and appropriating the spirit of his writings, foreigners find it in the highest degree difficult to seize their grammatical meaning. Probably there is not in any modern language so intricate a writer; abounding, without measure, in obscure allusions, in the most twisted phraseology; perplexed into endless entanglements and dislocations, parenthesis within parenthesis; not forgetting elisions, sudden whirls, quips, conceits and all manner of inexplicable crotchets: the whole moving on in the gayest manner, yet nowise in what seem military lines, but rather in huge parti-coloured mob-masses. How foreigners must find themselves bestead in this case, our readers may best judge from the fact, that a work with the following title was undertaken some twenty years ago, for the benefit of Richter's own countrymen: '*K. Reinhold's Lexicon for Jean Paul's Works, or explanation of all the foreign words and unusual modes of speech which occur in his writings; with short notices of the historical persons and facts therein alluded to; and plain German versions of the more difficult passages in the context:—a necessary assistance for all who would read those works with profit!*'

So much for the dress or vehicle of Richter's thoughts: now let it only be remembered farther, that the thoughts themselves are often of the most abstruse description, so that not till after laborious meditation, can much, either of truth or of falsehood, be discerned in them; and we have a man, from whom readers with weak nerves, and a taste in any degree sickly, will not fail to recoil, perhaps with a sentiment approaching to horror. And yet, as we said, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, Richter already meets with a certain recognition in England; he has his readers and admirers;

various translations from his works have been published among us; criticisms also, not without clear discernment, and nowise wanting in applause; and to all this, so far as we can see, even the Un-German part of the public has listened with some curiosity and hopeful anticipation. From which symptoms we should infer two things, both very comfortable to us in our present capacity: First, that the old straitlaced, microscopic sect of *belles-lettres* men, whose divinity was Elegance, a creed of French growth, and more admirable for men-milliners than for critics and philosophers, must be rapidly declining in these Islands; and secondly, which is a much more personal consideration, that, in still farther investigating and exhibiting this wonderful Jean Paul, we have attempted what will be, for many of our readers, no unwelcome service.

Our inquiry naturally divides itself into two departments, the Biographical and the Critical; concerning both of which, in their order, we have some observations to make; and what, in regard to the latter department at least, we reckon more profitable, some rather curious documents to present.

It does not appear that Richter's life, externally considered, differed much in general character from other literary lives, which, for most part, are so barren of incident: the earlier portion of it was straitened enough, but not otherwise distinguished; the latter and busiest portion of it was, in like manner, altogether private; spent chiefly in provincial towns, and apart from high scenes or persons; its principal occurrences the new books he wrote, its whole course a spiritual and silent one. He became an author in his nineteenth year; and with a conscientious assiduity adhered to that employment; not seeking, indeed carefully avoiding, any interruption or disturbance therein, were it only for a day or an hour. Nevertheless, in looking over those Sixty Volumes of his, we feel as if Richter's history must have another, much deeper interest and worth, than outward incidents could impart to

it. For the spirit which shines more or less completely through his writings is one of perennial excellence; rare in all times and situations, and perhaps nowhere and in no time more rare than in literary Europe at this era. We see in this man a high, self-subsistent, original and, in many respects, even great character. He shows himself a man of wonderful gifts, and with, perhaps, a still happier combination and adjustment of these: in whom Philosophy and Poetry are not only reconciled, but blended together into a purer essence, into Religion; who, with the softest, most universal sympathy for outward things, is inwardly calm, impregnable; holds on his way through all temptations and afflictions, so quietly, yet so inflexibly; the true literary man among a thousand false ones, the Apollo among neatherds; in one word, a man understanding the nineteenth century, and living in the midst of it, yet whose life is, in some measure, a heroic and devout one. No character of this kind, we are aware, is to be formed without manifold and victorious struggling with the world; and the narrative of such struggling, what little of it can be narrated and interpreted, will belong to the highest species of history. The acted life of such a man, it has been said, 'is itself a Bible'; it is a 'Gospel of Freedom,' preached abroad to all men; whereby, among mean unbelieving souls, we may know that nobleness has not yet become impossible; and, languishing amid boundless triviality and despicability, still understand that man's nature is indefeasibly divine, and so hold fast what is the most important of all faiths, the faith in ourselves.

But if the acted life of a *pius Vates* is so high a matter, the written life, which, if properly written, would be a translation and interpretation thereof, must also have great value. It has been said that no Poet is equal to his Poem, which saying is partially true; but, in a deeper sense, it may also be asserted, and with still greater truth, that no Poem is equal to its Poet. Now, it is Biography that first gives us both Poet and Poem, by the significance of the one elucidating and complet-

ing that of the other. That ideal outline of himself, which a man unconsciously shadows forth in his writings, and which, rightly deciphered, will be truer than any other representation of him, it is the task of the Biographer to fill-up into an actual coherent figure, and bring home to our experience, or at least our clear undoubting admiration, thereby to instruct and edify us in many ways. Conducted on such principles, the Biography of great men, especially of great Poets, that is, of men in the highest degree noble-minded and wise, might become one of the most dignified and valuable species of composition. As matters stand, indeed, there are few Biographies that accomplish anything of this kind: the most are mere Indexes of a Biography, which each reader is to write out for himself, as he peruses them; not the living body, but the dry bones of a body, which should have been alive. To expect any such Promethean virtue in a common Life-writer were unreasonable enough. How shall that unhappy Biographic brotherhood, instead of writing like Index-makers and Government-clerks, suddenly become enkindled with some sparks of intellect, or even of genial fire; and not only collecting dates and facts, but making use of them, look beyond the surface and economical form of a man's life, into its substance and spirit? The truth is, Biographies are in a similar case with Sermons and Songs; they have their scientific rules, their ideal of perfection and of imperfection, as all things have; but hitherto their rules are only, as it were, unseen Laws of Nature, not critical Acts of Parliament, and threaten us with no immediate penalty: besides, unlike Tragedies and Epics, such works may be something without being all: their simplicity of form, moreover, is apt to seem easiness of execution; and thus, for one artist in those departments, we have a thousand bunglers.

With regard to Richter, in particular, to say that his biographic treatment has been worse than usual, were saying much; yet worse than we expected, it has certainly been. Various 'Lives of Jean Paul,' anxiously endeavouring to profit

by the public excitement while it lasted, and communicating in a given space almost a minimum of information, have been read by us, within the last four years, with no great disappointment. We strove to take thankfully what little they had to give; and looked forward, in hope, to that promised 'Autobiography,' wherein all deficiencies were to be supplied. Several years before his death, it would seem, Richter had determined on writing some account of his own life; and with his customary honesty, had set about a thorough preparation for this task. After revolving many plans, some of them singular enough, he at last determined on the form of composition; and with a half-sportful allusion to Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit aus meinem Leben*, had prefixed to his work the title *Wahrheit aus meinem Leben* (Truth from my Life); having relinquished, as impracticable, the strange idea of 'writing, parallel to it, a *Dichtung* (Fiction) also, under 'cover of Nicolaus Margraf,'—a certain Apothecary existing only as hero of one of his last Novels! In this work, which weightier avocations had indeed retarded or suspended, considerable progress was said to have been made; and on Richter's decease, Herr Otto, a man of talents, who had been his intimate friend for half a lifetime, undertook the editing and completing of it; not without sufficient proclamation and assertion, which in the mean while was credible enough, that to him only could the post of Richter's Biographer belong.

Three little Volumes of that *Wahrheit aus Jean Pauls Leben*, published in the course of as many years, are at length before us. The First volume, which came out in 1826, occasioned some surprise, if not disappointment; yet still left room for hope. It was the commencement of a real Autobiography, and written with much heartiness and even dignity of manner; though taken up under a quite unexpected point of view; in that spirit of genial humour, of gay earnestness, which, with all its strange fantastic accompaniments, often sat on Jean Paul so gracefully, and to which, at any rate, no reader of his works could be a stranger. By virtue of an

autocratic ukase, Paul had appointed himself 'Professor of his own History,' and delivered to the Universe three beautiful 'Lectures' on that subject; boasting, justly enough, that, in his special department, he was better informed than any other man whatever. He was not without his oratorical secrets and professorial habits: thus, as Mr. Wortley, in writing his parliamentary speech to be read within his hat, had marked in various passages, 'Here cough,' so Paul, with greater brevity, had an arbitrary hieroglyph introduced here and there, among his papers, and purporting, as he tells us, "*Meine Herren, niemand scharre, niemand gähne*, Gentlemen, no scraping, no yawning!"—a hieroglyph, we must say, which many public speakers might stand more in need of than he.

Unfortunately, in the Second volume, no other Lectures came to light, but only a string of disconnected, indeed quite heterogeneous Notes, intended to have been fashioned into such; the full free stream of oratory dissipated itself into unsatisfactory drops. With the Third volume, which is by much the longest, Herr Otto appears more decidedly in his own person, though still rather with the scissors than with the pen; and behind a multitude of circumvallations and outposts, endeavours to advance his history a little; the Lectures having left it still almost at the very commencement. His peculiar plan, and the too manifest purpose to continue speaking in Jean Paul's manner, greatly obstruct his progress; which, indeed, is so inconsiderable, that at the end of this third volume, that is, after some seven hundred small octavo pages, we find the hero, as yet, scarcely beyond his twentieth year, and the history proper still only, as it were, beginning. We cannot but regret that Herr Otto, whose talent and good purpose, to say nothing of his relation to Richter, demand regard from us, had not adopted some straightforward method, and spoken out in plain prose, which seems a more natural dialect for him, what he had to say on this matter. Instead of a multifarious combination, tending

so slowly, if at all, towards unity, he might, without omitting those 'Lectures,' or any 'Note' that had value, have given us a direct Narrative, which, if it had wanted the line of Beauty, might have had the still more indispensable line of Regularity, and been, at all events, far shorter. Till Herr Otto's work is completed, we cannot speak positively; but, in the mean while, we must say that it wears an unprosperous aspect, and leaves room to fear that, after all, Richter's Biography may still long continue a problem. As for ourselves, in this state of matters, what help, towards characterising Jean Paul's practical Life, we can afford, is but a few slight facts gleaned from Herr Otto's and other meaner works; and which, even in our own eyes, are extremely insufficient.

Richter was born at Wonsiedel in Baireuth, in the year 1763; and as his birthday fell on the 21st of March, it was sometimes wittily said that he and the Spring were born together. He himself mentions this, and with a laudable intention: 'this epigrammatic fact,' says he, 'that I the Professor and the Spring came into the world together, I have indeed brought out a hundred times in conversation, before now; but I fire it off here purposely, like a cannon-salute, for the hundred-and-first time, that so by printing I may ever henceforth be unable to offer it again as *bon-mot bonbon*, when, through the Printer's Devil, it has already been presented to all the world.' Destiny, he seems to think, made another witticism on him; the word *Richter* being appellative as well as proper, in the German tongue, where it signifies *Judge*. His Christian name, Jean Paul, which long passed for some freak of his own, and a pseudonym, he seems to have derived honestly enough from his maternal grandfather, Johann Paul Kuhn, a substantial clock-maker in Hof; only translating the German *Johann* into the French *Jean*. The Richters, for at least two generations, had been schoolmasters, or very subaltern churchmen, distinguished for their poverty and their piety: the grandfather, it appears, is still remembered in his little circle, as a

man of quite remarkable innocence and holiness; 'in Neustadt,' says his descendant, 'they will show you a bench behind the organ, 'where he knelt on Sundays, and a cave he had made for himself in what is called the Little Culm, where he was wont to pray.' Holding, and laboriously discharging, three school or church offices, his yearly income scarcely amounted to fifteen pounds: 'and at this Hunger-fountain, common enough for Baireuth school-people, the man stood thirty-five years long, and cheerfully drew.' Preferment had been slow in visiting him: but at length 'it came to pass,' says Paul, 'just in my birth-year, that, on the 6th of August, probably through special connexions with the *Higher Powers*, he did obtain one of the most important places; in comparison with which, truly, Rectorate, and Town, and cave in the Culmberg, were well worth exchanging; a place, namely, in the Neustadt Churchyard.[1]—His good wife had been promoted thither twenty years before him. My parents had taken me, an infant, along with them to his death-bed. He was in the act of departing, when a clergyman (as my father has often told me) said to them: Now, let the old Jacob lay his hand on the child, and bless him. I was held into the bed of death, and he laid his hand on my head.—Thou good old grandfather! Often have I thought of thy hand, blessing as it grew cold,—when Fate led me out of dark hours into clearer,—and already I can believe in thy blessing, in this material world, whose life, foundation and essence is Spirit!'

The father, who at this time occupied the humble post of *Tertius* (Under-schoolmaster) and Organist at Wonsiedel, was shortly afterwards appointed Clergyman in the hamlet of Jodiz; and thence, in the course of years, transferred to Schwarzenbach on the Saale. He too was of a truly devout disposition, though combining with it more energy of character, and apparently more general talent; being noted in his

[1] *Gottesacker* (God's-field), not *Kirchhof*, the more common term and exactly corresponding to ours, is the word Richter uses here,—and almost always elsewhere, which in his writings he has often occasion to do.

neighbourhood as a bold, zealous preacher; and still partially known to the world, we believe, for some meritorious compositions in Church-music. In poverty he cannot be said to have altogether equalled his predecessor, who through life ate nothing but bread and beer; yet poor enough he was; and no less cheerful than poor. The thriving burgher's daughter, whom he took to wife, had, as we guess, brought no money with her, but only habits little advantageous for a schoolmaster or parson; at all events, the worthy man, frugal as his household was, had continual difficulties, and even died in debt. Paul, who in those days was called Fritz, narrates gaily, how his mother used to despatch him to Hof, her native town, with a provender-bag strapped over his shoulders, under pretext of purchasing at a cheaper rate there; but in reality to get his groceries and dainties furnished gratis by his grandmother. He was wont to kiss his grandfather's hand behind the loom, and speak with him; while the good old lady, parsimonious to all the world, but lavish to her own, privily filled his bag with the good things of this life, and even gave him almonds for himself, which, however, he kept for a friend. One other little trait, quite new in ecclesiastical annals, we must here communicate. Paul, in summing up the joys of existence at Jodiz, mentions this among the number:

'In Autumn evenings (and though the weather were bad) the Father used to go in his night-gown, with Paul and Adam into a potato-field lying over the Saale. The one younker carried a mattock, the other a hand-basket. Arrived on the ground, the Father set to digging new potatoes, so many as were wanted for supper; Paul gathered them from the bed into the basket, whilst Adam, clambering in the hazel thickets, looked out for the best nuts. After a time, Adam had to come down from his boughs into the bed, and Paul in his turn ascended. And thus, with potatoes and nuts, they returned contentedly home; and the pleasure of having run abroad, some mile in space, some hour in time, and then of celebrating the harvest-home, by candlelight, when they came back,—let every one paint to himself as brilliantly as the receiver thereof.'

To such persons as argue that the respectability of the

cloth depends on its price at the clothier's, it must appear surprising that a Protestant clergyman, who not only was in no case to keep fox-hounds, but even saw it convenient to dig his own potatoes, should not have fallen under universal odium, and felt his usefulness very considerably diminished. Nothing of this kind, however, becomes visible in the history of the Jodiz Parson: we find him a man powerful in his vocation; loved and venerated by his flock; nay, associating at will, and ever as an honoured guest, with the gentry of Voigtland, not indeed in the character of a gentleman, yet in that of priest, which he reckoned far higher. Like an old Lutheran, says his son, he believed in the great, as he did in ghosts; but without any shade of fear. The truth is, the man had a cheerful, pure, religious heart; was diligent in business, and fervent in spirit: and, in all the relations of his life, found this well-nigh sufficient for him.

To our Professor, as to Poets in general, the recollections of childhood had always something of an ideal, almost celestial character. Often, in his fictions, he describes such scenes with a fond minuteness; nor is poverty any deadly, or even unwelcome ingredient in them. On the whole, it is not by money, or money's worth, that man lives and has his being. Is not God's universe *within* our head, whether there be a torn skull-cap or a king's diadem *without*? Let no one imagine that Paul's young years were unhappy; still less that he looks back on them in a lachrymose, sentimental manner, with the smallest symptom either of boasting or whining. Poverty of a far sterner sort than this would have been a light matter to him; for a kind mother, Nature herself, had already provided against it; and, like the mother of Achilles, rendered him invulnerable to outward things. There was a bold, deep, joyful spirit looking through those young eyes; and to such a spirit the world *has* nothing poor, but all is rich, and full of loveliness and wonder. That our readers may glance with us into this foreign Parsonage, we shall translate some paragraphs from Paul's second Lecture, and

thereby furnish, at the same time, a specimen of his professorial style and temper :

'To represent the Jodiz life of our Hans Paul,—for by this name we shall for a time distinguish him, yet ever changing it with others,—our best course, I believe, will be to conduct him through a whole Idyl-year ; dividing the normal year into four seasons, as so many quarterly Idyls ; four Idyls exhaust his happiness.

'For the rest, let no one marvel at finding an Idyl-kingdom and pastoral-world in a little hamlet and parsonage. In the smallest bed you can raise a tulip-tree, which shall extend its flowery boughs over all the garden ; and the life-breath of joy can be inhaled as well through a window as in the open wood and sky. Nay, is not Man's Spirit (with all its infinite celestial-spaces) walled-in within a six-feet Body, with integuments, and Malpighian mucuses and capillary tubes ; and has only five strait world-windows, of Senses, to open for the boundless, round-eyed, round-sunned All ;—and yet it discerns and reproduces an All !

'Scarcely do I know with which of the four quarterly Idyls to begin ; for each is a little heavenly forecourt to the next : however, the climax of joys, if we start with Winter and January, will perhaps be most apparent. In the cold, our Father had commonly, like an Alpine herdsman come down from the upper altitude of his study ; and, to the joy of the children, was dwelling on the plain of the general family-room. In the morning, he sat by a window, committing his Sunday's sermon to memory ; and the three sons, Fritz (who I myself am), and Adam, and Gottlieb carried, by turns, the full coffee-cup to him, and still more gladly carried back the empty one, because the carrier was then entitled to pick the unmelted remains of the sugar-candy (taken against cough) from the bottom thereof. Out of doors, truly, the sky covered all things with silence ; the brook with ice, the village with snow : but in our room there was life : under the stove a pigeon-establishment ; on the windows finch-cages ; on the floor, the invincible bull brach, our *Bonne*, the night-guardian of the court-yard ; and a poodle, and the pretty *Scharmantel* (Poll), a present from the Lady von Plotho ;—and close by, the kitchen, with two maids ; and farther off, against the other end of the house, our stable, with all sorts of bovine, swinish and feathered cattle, and their noises : the threshers with their flails, also, at work within the court-yard, I might reckon as another item. In this way, with nothing but society on all hands, the whole male portion of the household easily spent their forenoons in tasks of memory, not far from the female portion, as busily employed in cooking.

'Holidays occur in every occupation ; thus I too had my airing

holidays,—analogous to watering holidays,—so that I could travel out in the snow of the court-yard, and to the barn with its threshing. Nay, was there a delicate embassy to be transacted in the village,—for example, to the schoolmaster, to the tailor,—I was sure to be despatched thither in the middle of my lessons; and thus I still got forth into the open air and the cold, and measured myself with the new snow. At noon, before our own dinner, we children might also, in the kitchen, have the hungry satisfaction to see the threshers fall-to and consume their victuals.

'The afternoon, again, was still more important, and richer in joys. Winter shortened and sweetened our lessons. In the long dusk, our Father walked to and fro; and the children, according to ability, trotted under his night-gown, holding by his hands. At sound of the Vesper-bell, we placed ourselves in a circle, and in concert devotionally chanted the hymn, *Die finstre Nacht bricht stark herein* (The gloomy Night is gathering round). Only in villages, not in towns, where probably there is more night than day labour, have the evening chimes a meaning and beauty, and are the swan-song of the day: the evening-bell is as it were the muffle of the over-loud heart, and, like a *ranz des vaches* of the plains, calls men from their running and toiling, into the land of silence and dreams. After a pleasant watching about the kitchen-door for the moonrise of candlelight, we saw our wide room at once illuminated and barricaded; to wit, the window-shutters were closed and bolted; and behind these window bastions and breast-works the child felt himself snugly nestled, and well secured against Knecht Ruprecht,[1] who on the outside could not get in, but only in vain keep growling and humming.

'About this period too it was that we children might undress, and in long train-shirts skip up and down. Idyllic joys of various sorts alternated: our Father either had his quarto Bible, interleaved with blank folio sheets, before him, and was marking, at each verse, the book wherein he had read anything concerning it;—or more commonly he had his ruled music-paper; and, undisturbed by this racketing of children, was composing whole concerts of church-music, with all their divisions; constructing his internal melody without any help of external tones (as Reichard too advises), or rather in spite of all external mistones. In both cases, in the last with the more pleasure, I looked on as he wrote; and rejoiced specially, when, by pauses of various instruments, whole pages were at once filled up. The children all sat sporting *on* that long writing and eating table, or even *under* it. * * *

'Then, at length, how did the winter evening, once a week, mount in worth, when the old errand-woman, coated in snow, with her fruit, flesh and general-ware basket, entered the kitchen from Hof; and we all

[1] The *Rawhead* (with bloody bones) of Germany.

in this case had the distant town in miniature before our eyes, nay, before our noses, for there were pastry-cakes in it!'

Thus, in dull winter imprisonment, among all manner of bovine, swinish and feathered cattle, with their noises, may Idyllic joys be found, if there is an eye to see them, and a heart to taste them. Truly happiness is cheap, did we apply to the right merchant for it. Paul warns us elsewhere not to believe, for these Idyls, that there were no sour days, no chidings and the like, at Jodiz: yet, on the whole, he had good reason to rejoice in his parents. They loved him well; his Father, he says, would 'shed tears' over any mark of quickness or talent in little Fritz: they were virtuous also, and devout, which, after all, is better than being rich. 'Ever and anon,' says he, 'I was hearing some narrative from my Father, how he and other clergymen had taken parts of their dress and given them to the poor: he related these things with joy, not as an admonition, but merely as a necessary occurrence. O God! I thank thee for my Father!'

Richter's education was not of a more sumptuous sort than his board and lodging. Some disagreement with the Schoolmaster at Jodiz had induced the Parson to take his sons from school, and determine to teach them himself. This determination he executed faithfully indeed, yet in the most limited style; his method being no Pestalozzian one, but simply the old scheme of task-work, and force-work, operating on a Latin grammar and a Latin vocabulary: and the two boys sat all day, and all year, at home, without other preceptorial nourishment than getting by heart long lists of words. Fritz learned honestly nevertheless, and in spite of his brother Adam's bad example. For the rest, he was totally destitute of books, except such of his Father's theological ones as he could come at by stealth: these, for want of better, he eagerly devoured; understanding, as he says, nothing whatever of their contents. With no less impetuosity, and no less profit, he perused the antiquated sets of Newspapers, which a kind patroness, the Lady von Plotho, already mentioned,

was in the habit of furnishing to his Father, not in separate sheets, but in sheaves monthly. This was the extent of his reading. Jodiz, too, was the most sequestered of all hamlets; had neither natural nor artificial beauty; no memorable thing could be seen there in a lifetime. Nevertheless, under an immeasurable Sky, and in a quite wondrous World it did stand; and glimpses into the infinite spaces of the Universe, and even into the infinite spaces of Man's Soul, could be had there as well as elsewhere. Fritz had his own thoughts, in spite of schoolmasters: a little heavenly seed of Knowledge, nay, of Wisdom, had been laid in him, and with no gardener but Nature herself, it was silently growing. To some of our readers, the following circumstance may seem unparalleled, if not unintelligible; to others nowise so:

'In the future Literary History of our hero it will become doubtful whether he was not born more for Philosophy than for Poetry. In earliest times the word *Weltweisheit* (Philosophy, *World-wisdom*),—yet also another word, *Morgenland* (East, *Morning-land*),—was to me an open Heaven's-gate, through which I looked-in over long, long gardens of joy.—Never shall I forget that inward occurrence, till now narrated to no mortal, wherein I witnessed the birth of my Self-consciousness, of which I can still give the place and time. One forenoon, I was standing, a very young child, in the outer door, and looking leftward at the stack of the fuel-wood,—when all at once the internal vision, "I am a ME (*ich bin ein Ich*)," came like a flash from heaven before me, and in gleaming light ever afterwards continued: then had my Me, for the first time, seen itself, and forever. Deceptions of memory are scarcely conceivable here; for, in regard to an event occurring altogether in the veiled Holy-of-Holies of man, and whose novelty alone has given permanence to such every-day recollections accompanying it, no posterior description from another party would have mingled itself with accompanying circumstances at all.'

It was in his thirteenth year that the family removed to that better church-living at Schwarzenbach; with which change, so far as school-education was concerned, prospects considerably brightened for him. The public Teacher there was no deep scholar or thinker, yet a lively, genial man, and warmly interested in his pupils; among whom he soon learned

to distinguish Fritz, as a boy of altogether superior gifts. What was of still more importance, Fritz now got access to books; entered into a course of highly miscellaneous, self-selected reading; and what with Romances, what with Belles-Lettres works, and Hutchesonian Philosophy, and controversial Divinity, saw an astonishing scene opening round him on all hands. His Latin and Greek were now better taught; he even began learning Hebrew. Two clergymen of the neighbourhood took pleasure in his company, young as he was; and were of great service now and afterwards: it was under their auspices that he commenced composition, and also speculating on Theology, wherein he 'inclined strongly to the heterodox side.'

In the 'family-room,' however, things were not nearly so flourishing. The Professor's three Lectures terminate before this date; but we gather from his Notes that surly clouds hung over Schwarzenbach, that 'his evil days began there.' The Father was engaged in more complex duties than formerly, went often from home, was encumbered with debt, and lost his former cheerfulness of humour. For his sons he saw no outlet except the hereditary craft of School-keeping; and let the matter rest there, taking little farther charge of them. In some three years the poor man, worn down with manifold anxieties, departed this life; leaving his pecuniary affairs, which he had long calculated on rectifying by the better income of Schwarzenbach, sadly deranged.

Meanwhile Friedrich had been sent to the Hof *Gymnasium* (Town-school), where, notwithstanding this event, he continued some time; two years in all; apparently the most profitable period of his whole tuition; indeed, the only period when, properly speaking, he had any tutor but himself. The good old cloth-making grandfather and grandmother took charge of him, under their roof; and he had a body of teachers, all notable in their way. Herr Otto represents him as a fine, trustful, kindly yet resolute youth, who went through his persecutions, preferments, studies, friendships and other school-

destinies in a highly creditable manner; and demonstrates this, at great length, by various details of facts, far too minute for insertion here. As a trait of Paul's intellectual habitudes, it may be mentioned that, at this time, he scarcely made any progress in History or Geography, much as he profited in all other branches; nor was the dull teacher entirely to blame, but also the indisposed pupil: indeed, it was not till long afterwards, that he overcame or suppressed his contempt for those studies, and with an effort of his own acquired some skill in them.[1] The like we have heard of other Poets and Philosophers, especially when their teachers chanced to be prosaists and unphilosophical. Richter boasts that he was never punished at school; yet between him and the Historico-geographical *Conrector* (Second Master) no good understanding could subsist. On one tragi-comical occasion, of another sort, they came into still more decided collision. The zealous Conrector, a most solid pains-taking man, desirous to render his Gymnasium as like a University as possible, had imagined that a series of 'Disputations,' some foreshadow of those held at College, might be a useful, as certainly enough it would be an ornamental thing. By ill-luck the worthy President had selected some church article for the theme of such a disputation: one boy was to defend, and it fell to Paul's lot to impugn the dogma; a task which, as hinted above, he was very specially qualified to undertake. Now, honest Paul knew nothing of the limits of this game; never dreamt but he might argue with his whole strength, to whatever results it might lead. In a very few rounds, accordingly, his antagonist was borne out of the ring, as good as lifeless; and the Conrector himself, seeing the danger, had, as it were,

[1] 'All History,' thus he writes in his thirty-second year, 'in so far as it is an affair of memory, can only be reckoned a sapless heartless thistle for pedantic chaffinches;—but, on the other hand, like Nature, it has highest value, in as far as we, by means of it, as by means of Nature, can divine and read the Infinite Spirit, who, with Nature and History, as with letters, legibly writes to us. He who finds a God in the physical world will also find one in the moral, which is History Nature forces on our heart a Creator; History a Providence.'

to descend from his presiding chair, and clap the gauntlets on his own more experienced hands. But Paul, nothing daunted, gave him also a Roland for an Oliver; nay, as it became more and more manifest to all eyes, was fast reducing him also to the frightfulest extremity. The Conrector's tongue threatened cleaving to the roof of his mouth; for his brain was at a stand, or whirling in eddies; only his gall was in active play. Nothing remained for him but to close the debate by a "Silence, Sirrah!"—and leave the room, with a face (like that of the much more famous Subrector Hans von Füchslein[1]) 'of a mingled colour, like red bole, green chalk, tinsel-yellow, and *vomissement de la reine*.'

With his studies in the Leipzig University, whither he proceeded in 1781, begins a far more important era for Paul; properly the era of his manhood, and first entire dependence on himself. In regard to literary or scientific culture, it is not clear that he derived much furtherance from Leipzig; much more, at least, than the mere neighbourhood of libraries and fellow-learners might anywhere else have afforded him. Certain professorial courses he did attend, and with diligence; but too much in the character of critic, as well as of pupil: he was in the habit of 'measuring minds' with men so much older and more honourable than he; and erelong his respect for many of them had not a little abated. What his original plan of studies was, or whether he had any fixed plan, we do not learn; at Hof, without election or rejection on his own part, he had been trained with some view to Theology; but this and every other professional view soon faded away in Leipzig, owing to a variety of causes; and Richter, now still more decidedly a self-teacher, broke loose from all corporate guilds whatsoever, and in intellectual culture, as in other respects, endeavoured to seek out a basis of his own. He read multitudes of books, and wrote down whole volumes of excerpts, and private speculations; labouring in all directions with insatiable eagerness; but from the University he derived

[1] See *Quintus Fixlein*. c. 7.

little guidance, and soon came to expect little. Ernesti, the only truly eminent man of the place, had died shortly after Paul's arrival there.

Nay, it was necessity as well as choice that detached him from professions; he had not the means to enter any. Quite another and far more pressing set of cares lay round him; not how he could live easily in future years, but how he could live at all in the present, was the grand question with him. Whatever it might be in regard to intellectual matters, certainly, in regard to moral matters, Leipzig was his true seminary, where, with many stripes, Experience taught him the wisest lessons. It was here that he first saw Poverty, not in the shape of Parsimony, but in the far sterner one of actual Want; and, unseen and single-handed, wrestling with Fortune for life or death, first proved what a rugged, deep-rooted, indomitable strength, under such genial softness, dwelt in him; and from a buoyant cloud-capt Youth, perfected himself into a clear, free, benignant, and lofty-minded Man.

Meanwhile the steps towards such a consummation were painful enough. His old Schoolmaster at Schwarzenbach, himself a Leipziger, had been wont to assure him that he might live for nothing in Leipzig, so easily were 'free-tables,' '*stipendia*,' private teaching and the like, to be procured there, by youths of merit. That Richter was of this latter species, the Rector of the Hof Gymnasium bore honourable witness; inviting the Leipzig dignitaries, in his *Testimonium*, to try the candidate themselves; and even introducing him in person (for the two had travelled together) to various influential men: but all these things availed him nothing. The Professors he found beleaguered by a crowd of needy sycophants, diligent in season and out of season, whose whole tactics were too loathsome to him; on all hands, he heard the sad saying: *Lipsia vult expectari*, Leipzig preferments must be waited for. Now, waiting was of all things the most inconvenient for poor Richter. In his pocket he had

little; friends, except one fellow-student, he had none; and at home the finance-department had fallen into a state of total perplexity, fast verging toward final ruin. The worthy old Cloth-manufacturer was now dead; his Wife soon followed him; and the Widow Richter, her favourite daughter, who had removed to Hof, though against the advice of all friends, that she might be near her, now stood alone there, with a young family, and in the most forlorn situation. She was appointed chief heir, indeed; but former benefactions had left far less to inherit than had been expected; nay, the other relatives contested the whole arrangement, and she had to waste her remaining substance in lawsuits, scarcely realising from it, in the shape of borrowed pittances and by forced sales, enough to supply her with daily bread. Nor was it poverty alone that she had to suffer, but contumely no less; the Hof public openly finding her guilty of Unthrift, and, instead of assistance, repeating to her dispraise, over their coffee, the old proverb, 'Hard got, soon gone'; for all which evils she had no remedy, but loud complaining to Heaven and Earth. The good woman, with the most honest dispositions, seems in fact to have had but a small share of wisdom; far too small for her present trying situation. Herr Otto says that Richter's portraiture of Lenette in the *Blumen- Frucht- und Dornen-Stücke* (Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces) contains many features of his mother: Lenette is of 'an upright but common and limited nature'; assiduous, even to excess, in sweeping and scouring; true-hearted, religious in her way, yet full of discontents, suspicion and headstrong whims; a spouse for ever plagued and plaguing; as the brave Stanislaus Siebenkäs, that true Diogenes of impoverished Poors'-Advocates, often felt, to his cost, beside her. Widow Richter's family, as well as her fortune, was under bad government, and sinking into lower and lower degradation: Adam, the brother, mentioned above, as Paul's yoke-fellow in Latin and potato-digging, had now fallen away even from the humble pretension of being a Schoolmaster, or indeed of being any-

thing; for after various acts of vagrancy, he had enlisted in a marching regiment; with which, or in other devious courses, he marched on, and only the grand billet-master, Death, found him fixed quarters. The Richter establishment had parted from its old moorings, and was now, with wind and tide, fast drifting towards fatal whirlpools.

In this state of matters, the scarcity of Leipzig could nowise be supplied from the fulness of Hof; but rather the two households stood like concave mirrors reflecting one another's keen hunger into a still keener for both. What outlook was there for the poor Philosopher of nineteen? Even his meagre 'bread and milk' could not be had for nothing; it became a serious consideration for him that the shoemaker, who was to sole his boots, 'did not trust.' Far from affording him any sufficient moneys, his straitened mother would willingly have made him borrow for her own wants; and was incessantly persuading him to get places for his brothers. Richter felt too, that except himself, desolate, helpless as he was, those brothers, that old mother, had no stay on earth. There are men with whom it is as with Schiller's Friedland: 'Night must it be ere Friedland's star will beam.' On this forsaken youth Fortune seemed to have let loose her bandogs, and hungry Ruin had him in the wind; without was no help, no counsel: but there lay a giant force within; and so, from the depths of that sorrow and abasement his better soul rose purified and invincible, like Hercules from his long Labours. A high, cheerful Stoicism grew up in the man. Poverty, Pain, and all Evil, he learned to regard, not as what they seemed, but as what they were; he learned to despise them, nay, in kind mockery to sport with them, as with bright-spotted wild-beasts which he had tamed and harnessed. 'What is Poverty,' said he; 'who is the man that whines under it? The pain is but as that of piercing the ears is to a maiden, and you hang jewels in the wound.' Dark thoughts he had, but they settled into no abiding gloom: 'sometimes,' says Otto, 'he would wave his finger

across his brow, as if driving back some hostile series of ideas'; and farther complaint he did not utter.[1] During this sad period, he wrote out for himself a little manual of practical philosophy, naming it *Andachtsbuch* (Book of Devotion), which contains such maxims as these:

'Every unpleasant feeling is a sign that I have become untrue to my resolutions.—Epictetus was not unhappy.—

'Not chance, but I am to blame for my sufferings.

'It were an impossible miracle if none befell thee: look for their coming, therefore; each day make thyself sure of many.

'Say not, were my sorrows other than these, I should bear them better.

'Think of the host of Worlds, and of the plagues on this World-mote. —Death puts an end to the whole.—

'For virtue's sake I am here: but if a man, for his task, forgets and sacrifices all, why shouldst not thou?—

'Expect injuries, for men are weak, and thou thyself doest such too often.

'Mollify thy heart by painting out the sufferings of thy enemy; think of him as of one spiritually sick, who deserves sympathy.—

'Most men judge so badly; why wouldst thou be praised by a child? —No one would respect thee in a beggar's coat: what is a respect that is paid to woollen cloth, not to thee?'

These are wise maxims for so young a man; but what was wiser still, he did not rest satisfied with mere maxims, which, how true soever, are only a dead letter, till Action first gives them life and worth. Besides devout prayer to the gods, he set his own shoulder to the wheel. 'Evil,' says he, 'is like a nightmare; the instant you begin to strive with it, to bestir yourself, it has already ended.' Without farther parleying, there as he stood, Richter grappled with his Fate, and resolutely determined on self-help. His means, it is true, were of the most unpromising sort, yet the only means he had: the writing of Books! He forthwith commenced

[1] In bodily pain he was wont to show the like endurance and indifference. At one period of his life he had violent headaches, which forced him, for the sake of a slight alleviation, to keep his head perfectly erect; you might see him talking with a calm face and all his old gaiety, and only know by this posture that he was suffering.

writing them. The *Grönländische Prozesse* (Greenland Lawsuits), a collection of satirical sketches, full of wild gay wit and keen insight, was composed in that base environment of his, with unpaid milkscores and unsoled boots; and even still survives, though the Author, besides all other disadvantages, was then only in his nineteenth year. But the heaviest part of the business yet remained; that of finding a purchaser and publisher. Richter tried all Leipzig with his manuscript, in vain; to a man, with that total contempt of Grammar which Jedediah Cleishbotham also complains of, they 'declined the *article*.' Paul had to stand by, as so many have done, and see his sunbeams weighed on hay-scales, and the hay-balance give no symptoms of moving. But Paul's heart moved as little as the balance. Leipzig being now exhausted, the World was all before him where to try; he had nothing for it but to search till he found, or till he died searching. One Voss of Berlin at length bestirred himself; accepted, printed the Book, and even gave him sixteen *louis d'or* for it. What a Potosi was here! Paul determined to be an author henceforth, and nothing but an author; now that his soul might even be kept in his body by that trade. His mother, hearing that he had written a book, thought that perhaps he could even write a sermon, and was for his coming down to preach in the High Church of Hof. 'What is a sermon,' said Paul, 'which every miserable student can spout forth? Or, think you, there is a parson in Hof that, not to speak of writing my Book, can, in the smallest degree, understand it?'

But unfortunately his Potosi was like other mines; the metalliferous vein did not last; what miners call a *shift* or *trouble* occurred in it, and now there was nothing but hard rock to hew on. The *Grönländische Prozesse*, though printed, did not sell; the public was in quest of pap and treacle, not of fierce curry like this. The Reviewing world mostly passed it by without notice; one poor dog in Leipzig even lifted up his leg over it. 'For anything we know,' saith he, 'much, if not all of what the Author here, in bitter tone, sets forth on

bookmaking, theologians, women and so on, may be true; but throughout the whole work, the determination to be witty acts on him so strongly, that we cannot doubt but his book will excite in all rational readers so much disgust, that they will see themselves constrained to close it again without delay.' And herewith the ill-starred quadruped passes on, as if nothing special had happened. 'Singular!' adds Herr Otto, 'this review, which at the time pretended to some ephemeral attention, and likely enough obtained it, would have fallen into everlasting oblivion, had not its connexion with that very work, which every rational reader was to close again, or rather never to open, raised it up for moments!' One moment, say we, is enough: let it drop again into that murky pool, and sink there to endless depths; for all flesh, and reviewer-flesh too, is fallible and pardonable.

Richter's next Book was soon ready; but, in this position of affairs, no man would buy it. The *Selection from the Papers of the Devil*, such was its wonderful title, lay by him, on quite another principle than the Horatian one, for seven long years. It was in vain that he exhibited, and corresponded, and left no stone unturned, ransacking the world for a publisher; there was none anywhere to be met with. The unwearied Richter tried other plans. He presented Magazine Editors with Essays, some one in ten of which might be accepted; he made joint-stock with certain provincial literati of the Hof district, who had cash, and published for themselves; he sometimes borrowed, but was in hot haste to repay; he lived as the young ravens; he was often in danger of starving. 'The prisoner's allowance,' says he, 'is bread and water; but I had only the latter.'

'Nowhere,' observes Richter on another occasion, 'can you collect the stress-memorials and siege-medals of Poverty more pleasantly and philosophically than at College: the Academic Bursche exhibit to us how many Humorists and Diogeneses Germany has in it.'[1] Travelling through this parched

[1] By certain speculators on German affairs, much has been written and talked

Sahara, with nothing round him but stern sandy solitude, and no landmark on Earth, but only loadstars in the Heaven, Richter does not anywhere appear to have faltered in his progress; for a moment to have lost heart, or even to have lost good humour. 'The man who fears not death,' says the Greek Poet, 'will start at no shadows.' Paul had looked Desperation full in the face, and found that for him she was not desperate. Sorely pressed on from without, his inward energy, his strength both of thought and resolve, did but increase, and establish itself on a surer and surer foundation; he stood like a rock amid the beating of continual tempests; nay, a rock crowned with foliage; and in its clefts nourishing flowers of sweetest perfume. For there was a passionate fire in him, as well as a stoical calmness; tenderest Love was there, and Devout Reverence; and a deep genial Humour lay, like warm sunshine, softening the whole, blending the whole into light sportful harmony. In these its hard trials, whatever was noblest in his nature came out in still purer clearness. It was here that he learned to distinguish what is perennial and imperishable in man, from what is transient and earthly; and to prize the latter, were it king's crowns and conqueror's triumphal chariots, but as the wrappage of the jewel; we might say, but as the finer or coarser Paper on which the Heroic Poem of Life is to be written. A lofty indestructible faith in the dignity of man took possession of

about what is, after all, a very slender item in German affairs, the *Burschenleben*, or manners of the young men at Universities. We must regret that in discussing this matter, since it was thought worth discussing, the true significance and soul of it should not have been, by some faint indication, pointed out to us. Apart from its duelling punctilios, and beer-songs, and tobacco-smoking, and other fopperies of the system, which are to the German student merely what coach-driving and horse-dealing, and other kindred fopperies, are to the English, Burschenism is not without its meaning more than Oxfordism or Cambridgeism. The Bursch strives to say in the strongest language he can: "See! I am an unmoneyed scholar, and a free *man*"; the Oxonian and Cantab, again, endeavour to say: "See! I am a moneyed scholar, and a spirited *gentleman*." We rather think the Bursch's assertion, were it rightly worded, would be the more profitable of the two.

him, and a disbelief in all other dignities; and the vulgar world, and what it could give him, or withhold from him, was, in his eyes, but a small matter. Nay, had he not found a voice for these things; which, though no man would listen to it, he felt to be a true one, and that if true no tone of it could be altogether lost? Preaching forth the Wisdom, which in the dark deep wells of Adversity he had drawn up, he felt himself strong, courageous, even gay. He had 'an internal world wherewith to fence himself against the frosts and heats of the external.' Studying, writing, in this mood, though grim Scarcity looked-in on him through the windows, he ever looked out again on that fiend with a quiet, half-satirical eye. Surely, we should find it hard to wish any generous nature such fortune: yet is one such man, nursed into manhood amid these stern, truth-telling influences, worth a thousand popular ballad-mongers, and sleek literary gentlemen, kept in perpetual boyhood by influences that always lie.

'In my Historical Lectures,' says Paul, 'the business of Hungering will in truth more and more make its appearance,—with the hero it rises to a great height,—about as often as Feasting in *Thummel's Travels*, and Tea-drinking in Richardson's *Clarissa*; nevertheless, I cannot help saying to Poverty: Welcome! so thou come not at quite too late a time! Wealth bears heavier on talent than Poverty; under gold-mountains and thrones, who knows how many a spiritual giant may lie crushed down and buried! When among the flames of youth, and above all of hotter powers as well, the oil of Riches is also poured in,—little will remain of the Phœnix but his ashes; and only a Goethe has force to keep, even at the sun of good fortune, his phœnix wings unsinged. The poor Historical Professor, in this place, would not, for much money, have had much money in his youth. Fate manages Poets, as men do singing-birds; you overhang the cage of the singer and make it dark, till at length he has caught the tunes you play to him, and can sing them rightly.'

There have been many Johnsons, Heynes and other meaner natures, in every country, that have passed through as hard a probation as Richter's was, and borne permanent traces of its good and its evil influences; some with their modesty and

quiet endurance combining a sickly dispiritment, others a hardened dulness or even deadness of heart; nay, there are some whom Misery itself cannot teach, but only exasperate; who, far from parting with the mirror of their Vanity, when it is trodden in pieces, rather collect the hundred fragments of it, and with more fondness and more bitterness than ever, behold not one but a hundred images of Self therein: to these men Pain is a pure evil, and as school-dunces their hard Pedagogue will only whip them to the end. But in modern days, and even among the better instances, there is scarcely one that we remember who has drawn from poverty and suffering such unmixed advantage as Jean Paul; acquiring under it not only Herculean strength, but the softest tenderness of soul; a view of man and man's life not less cheerful, even sportful, than it is deep and calm. To Fear he is a stranger; not only the rage of men, 'the ruins of Nature would strike him fearless'; yet he has a heart vibrating to all the finest thrills of Mercy, a deep loving sympathy with all created things. There is, we must say, something Old-Grecian in this form of mind; yet Old-Grecian under the new conditions of our own time; not an Ethnic, but a Christian greatness. Richter might have stood beside Socrates, as a faithful though rather tumultuous disciple; or better still, he might have bandied repartees with Diogenes, who, if he could nowhere find Men, must at least have admitted that this too was a Spartan Boy. Diogenes and he, much as they differed, mostly to the disadvantage of the former, would have found much in common: above all, that resolute self-dependence, and quite settled indifference to the 'force of public opinion.' Of this latter quality, as well as of various other qualities in Richter, we have a curious proof in the Episode, which Herr Otto here for the first time details with accuracy, and at large, 'concerning the Costume controversies.' There is something great as well as ridiculous in this whole story of the Costume, which we must not pass unnoticed.

It was in the second year of his residence at Leipzig, and when, as we have seen, his necessities were pressing enough, that Richter, finding himself unpatronised by the World, thought it might be reasonable if he paid a little attention, as far as convenient, to the wishes, rational orders and even whims of his only other Patron, namely, of Himself. Now the long visits of the hair-dresser, with his powders, puffs and pomatums, were decidedly irksome to him, and even too expensive; besides, his love of Swift and Sterne made him love the English and their modes; which things being considered, Paul made free to cut off his cue altogether, and with certain other alterations in his dress, to walk abroad in what was called the English fashion. We rather conjecture that, in some points, it was, after all, but Pseudo-English; at least, we can find no tradition of any such mode having then or ever been prevalent here in its other details. For besides the docked cue, he had shirts *à la Hamlet*; wore his breast open, without neckcloth; in such guise did he appear openly. Astonishment took hold of the minds of men. German students have more licence than most people in selecting fantastic garbs; but the bare neck and want of cue seemed graces beyond the reach of true art. We can figure the massive, portly cynic, with what humour twinkling in his eye he came forth among the elegant gentlemen; feeling, like that juggler-divinity Ramdass, well known to Baptist Missionaries, that 'he had fire enough in his stomach to burn away all the sins of the world.' It was a species of pride, even of foppery, we will admit; but a tough, strong-limbed species, like that which in ragged gown 'trampled on the pride of Plato.'

Nowise in so respectable a light, however, did a certain *Magister*, or pedagogue dignitary, of Richter's neighbourhood regard the matter. Poor Richter, poor in purse, rich otherwise, had, at this time, hired for himself a small mean garden-house, that he might have a little fresh air, through summer, in his studies: the Magister, who had hired a large sumptuous

one in the same garden, naturally met him in his walks, bare-necked, cueless; and perhaps not liking the cast of his countenance, strangely twisted into Sardonic wrinkles, with all its broad honest benignity,—took it in deep dudgeon that such an unauthorised character should venture to enjoy Nature beside him. But what was to be done? Supercilious looks, even frowning, would accomplish nothing; the Sardonic visage was not to be frowned into the smallest terror. The Magister wrote to the landlord, demanding that this nuisance should be abated. Richter, with a praiseworthy love of peace, wrote to the Magister, promising to do what he could: he would not approach his (the Magister's) house so near as last night; would walk only in the evenings and mornings, and thereby for most part keep out of sight the apparel 'which convenience, health and poverty had prescribed for him.' These were fair conditions of a boundary-treaty; but the Magister interpreted them in too literal a sense, and soon found reason to complain that they had been infringed. He again took pen and ink, and in peremptory language represented that Paul had actually come past a certain Statue, which, without doubt, stood within the debatable land; threatening him, therefore, with Herr Körner, the landlord's vengeance, and withal openly testifying his own contempt and just rage against him. Paul answered, also in writing, That he had nowise infringed his promise, this Statue, or any other Statue, having nothing to do with it; but that now he did altogether revoke said promise, and would henceforth walk whensoever and wheresoever seemed good to him, seeing he too paid for the privilege. 'To me,' observed he, 'Herr Körner is not dreadful (*fürchterlich*)'; and for the Magister himself he put down these remarkable words: 'You despise my mean name; *nevertheless take note of it; for you will not have done the latter long, till the former will not be in your power to do*; I speak ambiguously, that I may not speak arrogantly.' Be it noted, at the same time, that with a noble spirit of accommodation, Richter proposed yet new

terms of treaty; which being accepted, he, pursuant thereto, with bag and baggage forthwith evacuated the garden, and returned to his 'town-room at the Three Roses, in Peterstrasse,' glorious in retreat, and 'leaving his Paradise,' as Herr Otto with some conceit remarks, 'no less guiltlessly than voluntarily, for a certain bareness of breast and neck; whereas our First-Parents were only allowed to retain theirs so long as they felt themselves innocent in total nudity.' What the Magister thought of the 'mean name' some years afterwards, we do not learn.

But if such tragical things went on in Leipzig, how much more when he went down to Hof in the holidays, where, at any rate, the Richters stood in slight esteem! It will surprise our readers to learn that Paul, with the mildest-tempered pertinacity, resisted all expostulations of friends, and persecutions of foes, in this great cause; and went about *à la Hamlet*, for the space of no less than seven years! He himself seemed partly sensible that it was affectation; but the man would have his humour out. 'On the whole,' says he, '*I hold the constant regard we pay, in all our actions, to the judgments of others, as the poison of our peace, our reason and our virtue.* At this slave-chain I have long filed, and I scarcely ever hope to break it entirely asunder. I wish to accustom myself to the censure of others, and *appear* a fool, that I may learn to endure fools.' So speaks the young Diogenes, embracing his frozen pillar, by way of 'exercitation'; as if the world did not give us frozen pillars enough in this kind, without our wilfully stepping aside to seek them! Better is that other maxim: 'He who differs from the world in important matters should the more carefully conform to it in indifferent ones.' Nay, by degrees, Richter himself saw into this; and having now proved satisfactorily enough that he could take his own way when he so pleased,—leaving, as is fair, the 'most sweet voices' to take theirs also,—he addressed to his friends (chiefly the Voigtland Literati above alluded to) the following circular:

'ADVERTISEMENT

'The Undersigned begs to give notice, that whereas cropt hair has as many enemies as red hair, and said enemies of the hair are enemies likewise of the person it grows on; whereas farther, such a fashion is in no respect Christian, since otherwise Christian persons would have adopted it; and whereas, especially, the Undersigned has suffered no less from his hair than Absalom did from his, though on contrary grounds; and whereas it has been notified that the public purposed to send him into his grave, since the hair grew there without scissors: he hereby gives notice that he will not push matters to such extremity. Be it known, therefore, to the nobility, gentry and a discerning public in general, that the Undersigned proposes, on Sunday next, to appear in various important streets (of Hof) with a short false cue; and with this cue as with a magnet, and cord-of-love, and magic-rod, to possess himself forcibly of the affections of all and sundry, be who they may'

And thus ended 'gloriously,' as Herr Otto thinks, the long 'clothes-martyrdom'; from the course of which, besides its intrinsic comicality, we may learn two things: first, that Paul nowise wanted a due indifference to the popular wind, but, on fit or unfit occasion, could stand on his own basis stoutly enough, wrapping his cloak as himself listed; and secondly, that he had such a buoyant, elastic humour of spirit, that besides counter-pressure against Poverty, and Famine itself, there was still a clear overplus left to play fantastic tricks with, at which the angels could not indeed weep, but might well shake their heads and smile. We return to our history.

Several years before the date of this 'Advertisement,' namely in 1784, Paul, who had now determined on writing, with or without readers, to the end of the chapter, finding no furtherance in Leipzig but only hunger and hardship, bethought him that he might as well write in Hof beside his mother as there. His publishers, when he had any, were in other cities; and the two households, like two dying embers, might perhaps show some feeble point of red-heat between them, if cunningly laid together. He quitted Leipzig, after a three-years residence there; and fairly

commenced housekeeping on his own score. Probably there is not in the whole history of Literature any record of a literary establishment like that at Hof; so ruggedly independent, so simple, not to say altogether unfurnished. Lawsuits had now done their work, and the Widow Richter, with her family, was living in a 'house containing one apartment.' Paul had no books, except 'twelve manuscript volumes of excerpts,' and the considerable library which he carried in his head; with which small resources, the public, especially as he had still no cue, could not well see what was to become of him. Two great furtherances, however, he had, of which the public took no sufficient note: a real Head on his shoulders, not, as is more common, a mere hat-wearing empty *effigies* of a head; and the strangest, stoutest, indeed a quite noble Heart within him. Here, then, he could, as is the duty of man, 'prize his existence more than his manner of existence,' which latter was, indeed, easily enough disesteemed. Come of it what might, he determined, on his own strength, to try issues to the uttermost with Fortune; nay, while fighting like a very Ajax against her, to 'keep laughing in her face till she too burst into laughter, and ceased frowning at him.' He would nowise slacken in his Authorship, therefore, but continued stubbornly toiling, as at his right work, let the weather be sunny or snowy. For the rest, Poverty was written on the posts of his door, and within on every equipment of his existence; he that ran might read in large characters: 'Good Christian people, you perceive that I have little money; what inference do you draw from it?' So hung the struggle, and as yet were no signs of victory for Paul. It was not till 1788 that he could find a publisher for his *Teufels Papieren*; and even then few readers. But no disheartenment availed with him; Authorship was once for all felt to be his true vocation; and by it he was minded to continue at all hazards. For a short while, he had been tutor in some family, and had again a much more tempting offer of the like sort, but he refused it,

purposing henceforth to 'bring up no children but his own, —his books,' let Famine say to it what she pleased.

'With his mother,' says Otto, 'and at times also with several of his brothers, but always with one, he lived in a mean house, which had only a single apartment; and this went on even when,—after the appearance of the *Mümien*,—his star began to rise, ascending higher and higher, and never again declining. * * *

'As Paul, in the characters of Walt and Vult[1] (it is his direct statement in these Notes), meant to depict himself; so it may be remarked, that in the delineation of Lenette, his Mother stood before his mind, at the period when this down-pressed and humiliated woman began to gather heart, and raise herself up again;[2] seeing she could no longer doubt the truth of his predictions, that Authorship must and would prosper with him. She now the more busily, in one and the same room where Paul was writing and studying, managed the household operations; cooking, washing, scouring, handling the broom, and these being finished, spinning cotton. Of the painful income earned by this latter employment she kept a written account. One such revenue-book, under the title *Was ich ersponnen* (Earned by spinning), which extends from March 1793 to September 1794, is still in existence. The produce of March, the first year, stands entered there as 2 florins, 51 kreutzers, 3 pfennigs' (somewhere about four shillings!); 'that of April,' etc.; 'at last, that of September 1794, 2 fl. 1 kr.; and on the last page of the little book stands marked, that Samuel (the youngest son) had, on the 9th of this same September, got new boots, which cost 3 thalers,'—almost a whole quarter's revenue!

Considering these things, how mournful would it have seemed to Paul that Bishop Dogbolt could not get translated, because of Politics; and the too high-souled Viscount Plumcake, thwarted in courtship, was seized with a perceptible dyspepsia!

[1] *Gottwalt* and *Quoddeusvult*, two Brothers (see Paul's *Flegeljahre*) of the most opposite temperaments: the former a still, soft-hearted, tearful enthusiast; the other a madcap humorist, honest at bottom, but bursting out on all hands with the strangest explosions, speculative and practical.

[2] 'Quite up, indeed, she could never more rise; and in silent humility, avoiding any loud expression of satisfaction, she lived to enjoy, with timorous gladness, the delight of seeing her son's worth publicly recognised, and his acquaintance sought by the most influential men, and herself too honoured on this account, as she had never before been.'

We have dwelt the longer on this portion of Paul's history, because we reckon it interesting in itself; and that if the spectacle of a great man struggling with adversity be a fit one for the gods to look down on, much more must it be so for mean fellow-mortals to look up to. For us in Literary England, above all, such conduct as Richter's has a peculiar interest in these times; the interest of entire novelty. Of all literary phenomena, that of a literary man daring to believe that he is *poor*, may be regarded as the rarest. Can a man without capital actually open his lips and speak to mankind? Had he no landed property, then; no connexion with the higher classes; did he not even keep a gig? By these documents it would appear so. This was not a nobleman, nor gentleman, nor gigman;[1] but simply a man!

On the whole, what a wondrous spirit of gentility does animate our British Literature at this era! We have no Men of Letters now, but only Literary Gentlemen. Samuel Johnson was the last that ventured to appear in that former character, and support himself on his own legs, without any crutches, purchased or stolen: rough old Samuel, the last of all the Romans! Time was, when in English Literature, as in English Life, the comedy of 'Every Man in his Humour' was daily enacted among us; but now the poor French word, French in every sense, '*Qu'en dira-t-on?*' spellbinds us all, and we have nothing for it but to drill and cane each other into one uniform, regimental 'nation of gentlemen.' 'Let him who would write heroic poems,' said Milton, 'make his life a heroic poem.' Let him who would write heroic poems, say we, put money in his purse; or if he have no gold-money, let him put in copper-money, or pebbles, and chink with it

[1] In Thurtell's trial (says the *Quarterly Review*) occurred the following colloquy: '*Q.* What sort of person was Mr. Weare? *A.* He was always a respectable person. *Q.* What do you mean by respectable? *A.* He kept a gig.'—Since then we have seen a '*Defensio Gigmanica*, or Apology for the Gigmen of Great Britain,' composed not without eloquence, and which we hope one day to prevail on our friend, a man of some whims, to give to the public.

as with true metal, in the ears of mankind, that they may listen to him. Herein does the secret of good writing now consist, as that of good living has always done. When we first visited Grub-street, and with bared head did reverence to the genius of the place, with a "*Salve, magna parens!*" we were astonished to learn on inquiry, that the Authors did not dwell there now, but had all removed years ago to a sort of 'High Life below Stairs,' far in the West For why, what remedy was there; did not the wants of the age require it? How can men write without High Life; and how, except below Stairs, as Shoulder-knot, or as talking Katerfelto, or by second-hand communication with these two, can the great body of men acquire any knowledge thereof? Nay, has not the Atlantis, or true Blissful Island of Poesy, been, in all times, understood to lie Westward, though never rightly discovered till now? Our great fault with writers used to be, not that they were intrinsically more or less completed Dolts, with no eye or ear for the 'open secret' of the world, or for anything save the 'open display' of the world,—for its gilt ceilings, marketable pleasures, war-chariots, and all manner, to the highest manner, of Lord-Mayor shows, and Guildhall dinners, and their own small part and lot therein; but the head and front of their offence lay in this, that they had not 'frequented the society of the upper classes.' And now, with our improved age, and this so universal extension of 'High Life below Stairs,' what a blessed change has been introduced; what benign consequences will follow therefrom!

One consequence has already been a degree of Dapperism and Dilettantism, and rickety Debility, unexampled in the history of Literature, and enough of itself to make us 'the envy of surrounding nations'; for hereby the literary man, once so dangerous to the quiescence of society, has now become perfectly innoxious, so that a look will quail him, and he can be tied hand and foot by a spinster's thread. Hope there is, that henceforth neither Church nor State will

be put in jeopardy by Literature. The old literary man, as we have said, stood on his own legs; had a whole heart within him, and might be provoked into many things. But the new literary man, on the other hand, cannot stand at all, save in stays; he must first gird up his weak sides with the whalebone of a certain fashionable, knowing, half-squirarchal air, —be it inherited, bought, or, as is more likely, borrowed or stolen, whalebone; and herewith he stands a little without collapsing. If the man now twang his jew's-harp to please the children, what is to be feared from him; what more is to be required of him?

Seriously speaking, we must hold it a remarkable thing that every Englishman should be a 'gentleman'; that in so democratic a country, our common title of honour, which all men assert for themselves, should be one which professedly depends on station, on accidents rather than on qualities; or at best, as Coleridge interprets it, 'on a certain indifference to money matters,' which certain indifference again must be wise or mad, you would think, exactly as one possesses much money, or possesses little! We suppose it must be the commercial genius of the nation, counteracting and suppressing its political genius; for the Americans are said to be still more notable in this respect than we. Now, what a hollow, windy vacuity of internal character this indicates; how, in place of a rightly-ordered heart, we strive only to exhibit a full purse; and all pushing, rushing, elbowing on towards a false aim, the courtier's kibes are more and more galled by the toe of the peasant: and on every side, instead of Faith, Hope and Charity, we have Neediness, Greediness and Vainglory; all this is palpable enough. Fools that we are! Why should we wear our knees to horn, and sorrowfully beat our breasts, praying day and night to Mammon, who, if he would even hear us, has almost nothing to give? For, granting that the deaf brute-god were to relent for our sacrificings; to change our gilt brass into solid gold, and instead of hungry actors of rich gentility, make us all in very deed

Rothschild-Howards tomorrow, what good were it? Are we not already denizens of this wondrous England, with its high Shakspeares and Hampdens; nay, of this wondrous Universe, with its Galaxies and Eternities, and unspeakable Splendours, that we should so worry and scramble, and tear one another in pieces, for some acres (nay, still oftener, for the *show* of some acres), more or less, of clay property, the largest of which properties, the Sutherland itself, is invisible even from the Moon? Fools that we are! To dig and bore like ground-worms in those acres of ours, even if we have acres; and far from beholding and enjoying the heavenly Lights, not to know of them except by unheeded and unbelieved report! Shall certain pounds sterling that we may have in the Bank of England, or the ghosts, of certain pounds that we would fain seem to have, hide from us the treasures we are all born to in this the 'City of God'?

> My inheritance how wide and fair;
> Time is my estate, to Time I'm heir!

But, leaving the money-changers, and honour-hunters, and gigmen of every degree, to their own wise ways, which they will not alter, we must again remark as a singular circumstance, that the same spirit should, to such an extent, have taken possession of Literature also. This is the eye of the world; enlightening all, and instead of the shows of things unfolding to us things themselves: has the eye too gone blind; has the Poet and Thinker adopted the philosophy of the Grocer and Valet in Livery? Nay, let us hear Lord Byron himself on the subject. Some years ago, there appeared in the Magazines, and to the admiration of most editorial gentlemen, certain extracts from Letters of Lord Byron's, which carried this philosophy to rather a high pitch. His Lordship, we recollect, mentioned, that 'all rules for Poetry were not worth a d—n' (saving and excepting, doubtless, the ancient Rule-of-Thumb, which must still have place here); after which aphorism, his Lordship proceeded to state that

the great ruin of all British Poets sprang from a simple source; their exclusion from High Life in London, excepting only some shape of that High Life below Stairs, which, however, was nowise adequate: he himself and Thomas Moore were perfectly familiar in such upper life; he by birth, Moore by happy accident, and so they could both write Poetry; the others were not familiar, and so could not write it.—Surely it is fast growing time that all this should be drummed out of our Planet, and forbidden to return.

Richter, for his part, was quite excluded from the West-end of Hof: for Hof too has its West-end; 'every mortal longs for his parade-place; would still wish, at banquets, to be master of some seat or other, wherein to overtop this or that plucked goose of the neighbourhood.' So poor Richter could only be admitted to the West-end of the Universe, where truly he had a very superior establishment. The legal, clerical and other conscript fathers of Hof might, had they so inclined, have lent him a few books, told or believed some fewer lies of him, and thus positively and negatively shown the young adventurer many a little service; but they inclined to none of these things, and happily he was enabled to do without them. Gay, gentle, frolicsome as a lamb, yet strong, forbearant and royally courageous as a lion, he worked along, amid the scouring of kettles, the hissing of frying-pans, the hum of his mother's wheel;—and it is not without a proud feeling that our reader (for he too is a man) hears of victory being at last gained, and of Works, which the most reflective nation in Europe regards as classical, being written under such accompaniments.

However, it is at this lowest point of the Narrative that Herr Otto for the present stops short; leaving us only the assurance that better days are coming: so that concerning the whole ascendant and dominant portion of Richter's history, we are left to our own resources; and from these we have only gathered some scanty indications, which may be summed up with a very disproportionate brevity. It appears

that the *Unsichtbare Loge* (Invisible Lodge), sent forth from the Hof spinning-establishment in 1793, was the first of his works that obtained any decisive favour. A long trial of faith; for the man had now been besieging the literary citadel upwards of ten years, and still no breach visible! With the appearance of *Hesperus*, another wondrous Novel, which proceeded from the same 'single apartment,' in 1796, the siege may be said to have terminated by storm; and Jean Paul, whom the most knew not what in the world to think of, whom here and there a man of weak judgment had not even scrupled to declare half-mad, made it universally indubitable, that though encircled with dusky vapours, and shining out only in strange many-hued irregular bursts of flame, he was and would be one of the celestial Luminaries of his day and generation. The keen intellectual energy displayed in *Hesperus*, still more the nobleness of mind, the sympathy with Nature, the warm, impetuous, yet pure and lofty delineations of Friendship and Love; in a less degree perhaps, the wild boisterous humour that everywhere prevails in it, secured Richter not only admirers, but personal well-wishers in all quarters of his country. Gleim, for example, though then eighty years of age, and among the last survivors of a quite different school, could not contain himself with rapture. 'What a divine genius (*Gottgenius*),' thus wrote he some time afterwards, 'is our Friedrich Richter! I am reading his *Blumenstücke* for the second time: here is more than Shakspeare, said I, at fifty passages I have marked. What a divine genius! I wonder over the human head, out of which these streams, these brooks, these Rhine-falls, these Blandusian fountains pour forth over human nature to make human nature humane; and if today I object to the plan, object to phrases, to words, I am contented with all tomorrow.' The kind lively old man, it appears, had sent him a gay letter, signed 'Septimus Fixlein,' with a present of money in it; to which Richter, with great heartiness, and some curiosity to penetrate the secret, made answer in this very *Blumenstücke*;

and so erelong a joyful acquaintance and friendship was formed; Paul had visited Halberstadt, with warmest welcome, and sat for his picture there (an oil painting by Pfenninger), which is still to be seen in Gleim's *Ehrentempel* (Temple of Honour). About this epoch too, the Reviewing world, after a long conscientious silence, again opened its thick lips; and in quite another dialect; screeching out a rusty *Nunc Domine dimittas*, with considerable force of pipe, instead of its last monosyllabic and very unhandsome *grunt*. For the credit of our own guild, we could have wished that the Reviewing world had struck up its *Dimittas* a little sooner.

In 1797 the Widow Richter was taken away from the strange variable climate of this world,—we shall hope into a sunnier one; her kettles hung unscoured on the wall; and the spool, so often filled with her cotton-thread and wetted with her tears, revolved no more. Poor old weather-beaten, heavy-laden soul! And yet a light-beam from on high was in her also; and the 'nine shillings for Samuel's new boots' were more bounteous and more blessed than many a king's ransom. Nay, she saw before departing, that she, even she, had born a mighty man; and her early sunshine, long drowned in deluges, again looked out at evening with sweet farewell.

The Hof household being thus broken up, Richter for some years led a wandering life. In the course of this same 1797 we find him once more in Leipzig; and truly under far other circumstances than of old. For instead of silk-stockinged, shovel-hatted, but too imperious Magisters, that would not let him occupy his own hired dog-hutch in peace, 'he here,' says Heinrich Döring,[1] 'became acquainted with the three Princesses, adorned with every charm of person and of mind, the daughters of the Duchess of Hildburghausen! The Duke, who also did justice to his extraordinary merits, conferred on him, some years afterwards, the title of *Legationsrath* (Councillor of Legation).' To Princes and Princesses,

[1] *Leben Jean Pauls.* Gotha, 1826.

indeed, Jean Paul seems, ever henceforth, to have had what we should reckon a surprising access. For example:—'the social circles where the Duchess Amelia (of Weimar) was wont to assemble the most talented men, first, in Ettersburg, afterwards in Tiefurt';—then the 'Duke of Meinungen at Coburg, who had with pressing kindness invited him';—the Prince Primate Dalberg, who did much more than invite him;—late in life, 'the gifted Duchess Dorothea, in Lobichau, of which visit he has himself commemorated the festive days,' etc. etc.;—all which small matters, it appears to us, should be taken into consideration by that class of British philosophers, troublesome in many an intellectual tea-circle, who deduce the 'German bad taste' from our own old everlasting 'want of intercourse'; whereby, if it so seemed good to them, their tea, till some less self-evident proposition were started, might be 'consumed with a certain stately silence.'

But next year (1798) there came on Paul a far grander piece of good fortune than any of these; namely, a good wife; which, as Solomon has long ago recorded, is a 'good thing.' He had gone from Leipzig to Berlin, still busily writing; 'and during a longer residence in this latter city,' says Döring, 'Caroline Mayer, daughter of the Royal Prussian Privy Councillor and Professor of Medicine, Dr. John Andrew Mayer' (these are all his titles), 'gave him her hand; nay, even,' continues the microscopic Döring, 'as is said in a public paper, bestowed on him (*aufdrückte*) the bride-kiss of her own accord.' What is still more astonishing, she is recorded to have been a 'chosen one of her sex,' one that, 'like a gentle, guardian, care-dispelling genius, went by his side through all his pilgrimage.'

Shortly after this great event, Paul removed with his new wife to Weimar, where he seems to have resided some years, in high favour with whatever was most illustrious in that city. His first impression on Schiller is characteristic enough. 'Of Hesperus,' thus writes Schiller, 'I have yet made no mention to you. I found him pretty much what I expected;

foreign, like a man fallen from the Moon; full of good will, and heartily inclined to see things about him, but without organ for seeing them. However, I have only spoken to him once, and so I can say little of him.'[1] In answer to which, Goethe also expresses his love for Richter, but 'doubts whether in literary practice he will ever fall-in with them two, much as his theoretical creed inclined that way.' Hesperus proved to have more 'organ' than Schiller gave him credit for; nevertheless Goethe's doubt had not been unfounded. It was to Herder that Paul chiefly attached himself here; esteeming the others as high-gifted, friendly men, but only Herder as a teacher and spiritual father; of which latter relation, and the warm love and gratitude accompanying it on Paul's side, his writings give frequent proof. 'If Herder was not a Poet,' says he once, 'he was something more,—a Poem!' With Wieland too he stood on the friendliest footing, often walking out to visit him at Osmanstädt, whither the old man had now retired. Perhaps these years spent at Weimar, in close intercourse with so many distinguished persons, were, in regard to outward matters, among the most instructive of Richter's life: in regard to inward matters, he had already served, and with credit, a hard apprenticeship elsewhere. We must not forget to mention that *Titan*, one of his chief romances (published at Berlin in 1800), was written during his abode at Weimar; so likewise the *Flegeljahre* (Wild Oats); and the eulogy of *Charlotte Corday*, which last, though originally but a Magazine Essay, deserves notice for its bold eloquence, and the antique republican spirit manifested in it. With respect to *Titan*, which, together with its *Comic Appendix*, forms six very extraordinary volumes, Richter was accustomed, on all occasions, to declare it his masterpiece, and even the best he could ever hope to do; though there are not wanting readers who continue to regard *Hesperus* with preference. For ourselves, we have read *Titan* with a certain

[1] *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe* (Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe), b. ii. 77.

disappointment, after hearing so much of it; yet on the whole must incline to the Author's opinion. One day we hope to afford the British public some sketch of both these works, concerning which, it has been said, 'there is solid metal enough in them to fit-out whole circulating libraries, were it beaten into the usual filigree; and much which, attenuate it as we might, no Quarterly Subscriber could well carry with him.' Richter's other Novels published prior to this period are, the *Invisible Lodge*; the *Siebenkäs* (or Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces); the *Life of Quintus Fixlein*; the *Jubelsenior* (Parson in Jubilee): *Jean Paul's Letters and Future History*, the *Dejeuner in Kuhschnappel*, the *Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess*, scarcely belonging to this species. The Novels published afterwards, which we may as well catalogue here, are, the *Leben Fibels* (Life of Fibel); *Katzenbergers Badereise* (Katzenberger's Journey to the Bath); *Schmelzles Reise nach Flätz* (Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz); the *Comet*, named also *Nicholaus Margraf*.

It seems to have been about the year 1802, that Paul had a pension bestowed upon him by the *Fürst Primus* (Prince Primate) von Dalberg, a prelate famed for his munificence, whom we have mentioned above. What the amount was, we do not find specified, but only that it 'secured him the means of a comfortable life,' and was 'subsequently,' we suppose after the Prince Primate's decease, 'paid him by the King of Bavaria.' On the strength of which fixed revenue, Paul now established for himself a fixed household; selecting for this purpose, after various intermediate wanderings, the city of Baireuth, 'with its kind picturesque environment'; where, with only brief occasional excursions, he continued to live and write. We have heard that he was a man universally loved, as well as honoured there: a friendly, true, and high-minded man; copious in speech, which was full of grave genuine humour; contented with simple people and simple pleasures; and himself of the simplest habits and wishes. He had three children; and a guardian angel, doubtless not without her

flaws, yet a reasonable angel notwithstanding. For a man with such obdured Stoicism, like triple steel, round his breast; and of such gentle, deep-lying, ever-living springs of Love within it,—all this may well have made a happy life. Besides, Paul was of exemplary, unwearied diligence in his vocation; and so had, at all times, 'perennial, fire-proof Joys, namely Employments.' In addition to the latter part of the Novels named above, which, with the others, as all of them are more or less genuine poetical productions, we feel reluctant to designate even transiently by so despicable an English word,—his philosophical and critical performances, especially the *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (Introduction to Æsthetics), and the *Levana* (Doctrine of Education), belong wholly to Baireuth; not to enumerate a multitude of miscellaneous writings (on moral, literary, scientific subjects, but always in a humorous, fantastic, poetic dress), which of themselves might have made the fortune of no mean man. His heart and conscience, as well as his head and hand, were in the work; from which no temptation could withdraw him. 'I hold my duty,' says he in these Biographical Notes, 'not to lie in enjoying or acquiring, but in writing,—whatever time it may cost, whatever money may be forborne,—nay, whatever pleasure; for example, that of seeing Switzerland, which nothing but the sacrifice of time forbids.'—'I deny myself my evening meal (*Vesperessen*) in my eagerness to work; but the interruptions by my children I cannot deny myself.' And again: 'A Poet, who presumes to give poetic delight, should contemn and willingly forbear all enjoyments, the sacrifice of which affects not his creative powers; that so he may perhaps delight a century and a whole people.' In Richter's advanced years, it was happy for him that he could say: 'When I look at what has been made out of me, I must thank God that I paid no heed to external matters, neither to time nor toil, nor profit nor loss; the thing is there, and the instruments that did it I have forgotten, and none else knows them. In this wise has the unimportant series of moments been changed

into something higher that remains.'—'I have described so much,' says he elsewhere, 'and I die without ever having seen Switzerland, and the Ocean, and so many other sights. But the Ocean of Eternity I shall in no case fail to see.'

A heavy stroke fell on him in the year 1821, when his only son, a young man of great promise, died at the University. Paul lost not his composure; but was deeply, incurably wounded. 'Epistolary lamentations on my misfortune,' says he, 'I read unmoved, for the bitterest is to be heard within myself, and I must shut the ears of my soul to it; but a single new trait of Max's fair nature opens the whole lacerated heart asunder again, and it can only drive its blood into the eyes.' New personal sufferings awaited him: a decay of health, and, what to so indefatigable a reader and writer was still worse, a decay of eyesight, increasing at last to almost total blindness. This too he bore with his old steadfastness, cheerfully seeking what help was to be had; and when no hope of help remained, still cheerfully labouring at his vocation, though in sickness and in blindness.[1] Dark without, he was inwardly full of light; busied on his favourite theme, the *Immortality of the Soul*; when (on the 14th of November 1825) Death came, and Paul's work was all accomplished, and that great question settled for him on far higher and indisputable evidence. The unfinished Volume (which under the title of *Selina* we now have) was carried on his bier to the grave; for his funeral was public, and in Baireuth, and elsewhere, all possible honour was done to his memory.

In regard to Paul's character as a man we have little to say, beyond what the facts of this Narrative have already said more plainly than in words. We learn from all quarters, in

[1] He begins a letter applying for spectacles (August 1824) in these terms: 'Since last winter, my eyes (the left had already, without cataract, been long half-blind, and, like Reviewers and *Littérateurs*, read nothing but title-pages) have been seized by a daily-increasing Night-Ultra and Enemy-to-Light, who, did not I withstand him, would shortly drive me into the Orcus of Amaurosis. Then, *Addio, opera omnia*!' Döring, p. 32.

one or the other dialect, that the pure, high morality which adorns his writings stamped itself also on his life and actions. 'He was a tender husband and father,' says Döring, 'and goodness itself towards his friends and all that was near him.' The significance of such a spirit as Richter's, practically manifested in such a life, is deep and manifold, and at this era will merit careful study. For the present, however, we must leave it, in this degree of clearness, to the reader's own consideration; another and still more immediately needful department of our task still remains for us.

Richter's intellectual and Literary character is, perhaps, in a singular degree the counterpart and image of his practical and moral character: his Works seem to us a more than usually faithful transcript of his mind; written with great warmth direct from the heart, and like himself, wild, strong, original, sincere. Viewed under any aspect, whether as Thinker, Moralist, Satirist, Poet, he is a phenomenon; a vast, many-sided, tumultuous, yet noble nature; for faults as for merits, 'Jean Paul the Unique.' In all departments, we find in him a subduing force; but a lawless, untutored, as it were half-savage force. Thus, for example, few understandings known to us are of a more irresistible character than Richter's; but its strength is a natural, unarmed, Orson-like strength: he does not cunningly undermine his subject, and lay it open, by syllogistic implements or any rule of art; but he crushes it to pieces in his arms, he treads it asunder, not without gay triumph, under his feet; and so in almost monstrous fashion, yet with piercing clearness, lays bare the inmost heart and core of it to all eyes. In passion again, there is the same wild vehemence: it is a voice of softest pity, of endless boundless wailing, a voice as of Rachel weeping for her children;—or the fierce bellowing of lions amid savage forests. Thus too, he not only loves Nature, but he revels in her; plunges into her infinite bosom, and fills his whole heart to intoxication with her charms. He tells us that he was wont to study, to write, almost to live, in the open

air; and no skyey aspect was so dismal that it altogether wanted beauty for him. We know of no Poet with so deep and passionate and universal a feeling towards Nature: 'from the solemn phases of the starry heaven to the simple floweret of the meadow, his eye and his heart are open for her charms and her mystic meanings.' But what most of all shadows forth the inborn essential temper of Paul's mind, is the sportfulness, the wild heartfelt Humour, which, in his highest as in his lowest moods, ever exhibits itself as a quite inseparable ingredient. His Humour, with all its wildness, is of the gravest and kindliest, a genuine Humour; 'consistent with utmost earnestness, or rather, inconsistent with the want of it.' But on the whole, it is impossible for him to write in other than a humorous manner, be his subject what it may. His Philosophical Treatises, nay, as we have seen, his Autobiography itself, everything that comes from him, is encased in some quaint fantastic framing; and roguish eyes (yet with a strange sympathy in the matter, for his Humour, as we said, is heartfelt and true) look out on us through many a grave delineation. In his Novels, above all, this is ever an indispensable quality, and, indeed, announces itself in the very entrance of the business, often even on the title-page. Think, for instance, of that *Selection from the Papers of the Devil; Hesperus*, OR *the Dog-post-days; Siebenkäs's Wedded-life, Death* AND *Nuptials!*

'The first aspect of these peculiarities,' says one of Richter's English critics, 'cannot prepossess us in his favour; we are too forcibly reminded of theatrical claptraps and literary quackery: nor on opening one of the works themselves is the case much mended. Piercing gleams of thought do not escape us; singular truths, conveyed in a form as singular; grotesque, and often truly ludicrous delineations; pathetic, magnificent, far-sounding passages; effusions full of wit, knowledge and imagination, but difficult to bring under any rubric whatever; all the elements, in short, of a glorious intellect, but dashed together in such wild arrangement that their order seems the very ideal of confusion. The style and structure of the book appear alike incomprehensible. The narrative is every now and then suspended, to make way for some "Extra-leaf," some wild digres-

sion upon any subject but the one in hand; the language groans with indescribable metaphors, and allusions to all things human and divine; flowing onwards, not like a river, but like an inundation; circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling, now this way, now that, till the proper current sinks out of view amid the boundless uproar. We close the work with a mingled feeling of astonishment, oppression and perplexity; and Richter stands before us in brilliant cloudy vagueness, a giant mass of intellect, but without form, beauty or intelligible purpose.

'To readers who believe that intrinsic is inseparable from superficial excellence, and that nothing can be good or beautiful which is not to be seen-through in a moment, Richter can occasion little difficulty. They admit him to be a man of vast natural endowments, but he is utterly uncultivated, and without command of them; full of monstrous affectation, the very high-priest of Bad Taste; knows not the art of writing, scarcely that there is such an art; an insane visionary, floating forever among baseless dreams that hide the firm earth from his view: an intellectual Polyphemus, in short, *monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens,* (carefully adding) *cui lumen ademptum*; and they close their verdict reflectively with his own praiseworthy maxim: "Providence has given to the English the empire of the sea, to the French that of the land, to the Germans that of—the air."

'In this way the matter is adjusted; briefly, comfortably and wrong. The casket was difficult to open: did we know, by its very shape, that there was nothing in it, that so we should cast it into the sea? Affectation is often singularity, but singularity is not always affectation. If the nature and condition of a man be really and truly, not conceitedly and untruly, singular, so also will his manner be, so also ought it to be. Affectation is the product of Falsehood, a heavy sin, and the parent of numerous heavy sins; let it be severely punished, but not too lightly imputed. Scarcely any mortal is absolutely free from it, neither most probably is Richter; but it is in minds of another substance than his that it grows to be the ruling product. Moreover, he is actually not a visionary; but, with all his visions, will be found to see the firm Earth, in its whole figures and relations, much more clearly than thousands of such critics, who too probably can see nothing else. Far from being untrained or uncultivated, it will surprise these persons to discover that few men have studied the art of writing, and many other arts besides, more carefully than he; that his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* abounds with deep and sound maxims of criticism; in the course of which many complex works, his own among others, are rigidly and justly tried, and even the graces and minutest qualities of style are by no means overlooked or unwisely handled.

'Withal, there is something in Richter that incites us to a second, to

a third perusal. His works are hard to understand, but they always *have* a meaning, often a true and deep one. In our closer, more comprehensive glance, their truth steps forth with new distinctness, their error dissipates and recedes, passes into veniality, often even into beauty; and at last the thick haze which encircled the form of the writer melts away, and he stands revealed to us in his own steadfast features, a colossal spirit, a lofty and original thinker, a genuine poet, a high-minded, true and most amiable man.

'I have called him a colossal spirit, for this impression continues with us: to the last we figure him as something gigantic: for all the elements of his structure are vast, and combined together in living and life-giving, rather than in beautiful or symmetrical order. His Intellect is keen, impetuous, far-grasping, fit to rend in pieces the stubbornest materials, and extort from them their most hidden and refractory truth. In his Humour he sports with the highest and the lowest, he can play at bowls with the Sun and Moon. His Imagination opens for us the Land of Dreams; we sail with him through the boundless Abyss; and the secrets of Space, and Time, and Life, and Annihilation, hover round us in dim, cloudy forms; and darkness, and immensity, and dread encompass and overshadow us. Nay, in handling the smallest matter, he works it with the tools of a giant. A common truth is wrenched from its old combinations, and presented to us in new, impassable, abysmal contrast with its opposite error. A trifle, some slender character, some jest, or quip, or spiritual toy, is shaped into most quaint, yet often truly living form; but shaped somehow as with the hammer of Vulcan, with three strokes that might have helped to forge an Ægis. The treasures of his mind are of a similar description with the mind itself; his knowledge is gathered from all the kingdoms of Art, and Science, and Nature, and lies round him in huge unwieldy heaps. His very language is Titanian; deep, strong, tumultuous; shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes.

'Among Richter's gifts,' continues this critic, 'the first that strikes us as truly great is his Imagination; for he loves to dwell in the loftiest and most solemn provinces of thought: his works abound with mysterious allegories, visions and typical adumbrations; his Dreams, in particular, have a gloomy vastness, broken here and there by wild far-darting splendour; and shadowy forms of meaning rise dimly from the bosom of the void Infinite. Yet, if I mistake not, Humour is his ruling quality, the quality which lives most deeply in his inward nature, and most strongly influences his manner of being. In this rare gift, for none is rarer than true Humour, he stands unrivalled in his own country, and among late writers in every other. To describe Humour is difficult at all times, and would perhaps be more than usually difficult in Richter's

case. Like all his other qualities, it is vast, rude, irregular; often perhaps overstrained and extravagant; yet, fundamentally, it is genuine Humour, the Humour of Cervantes and Sterne; the product not of Contempt, but of Love, not of superficial distortion of natural forms, but of deep though playful sympathy with all forms of Nature. * * *

'So long as Humour will avail him, his management even of higher and stronger characters may still be pronounced successful; but wherever Humour ceases to be applicable, his success is more or less imperfect. In the treatment of heroes proper he is seldom completely happy. They shoot into rugged exaggeration in his hands; their sensibility becomes too copious and tearful, their magnanimity too fierce, abrupt and thoroughgoing. In some few instances they verge towards absolute failure: compared with their less ambitious brethren, they are almost of a vulgar cast; with all their brilliancy and vigour, too like that positive, determinate, volcanic class of personages whom we meet with so frequently in Novels; they call themselves Men, and do their utmost to prove the assertion, but they cannot make us believe it; for, after all their vapouring and storming, we see well enough that they are but Engines, with no more life than the Freethinkers' model in *Martinus Scriblerus*, the Nuremberg Man, who operated by a combination of pipes and levers, and though he could breathe and digest perfectly, and even reason as well as most country parsons, was made of wood and leather. In the general conduct of such histories and delineations, Richter seldom appears to advantage: the incidents are often startling and extravagant; the whole structure of the story has a rugged, broken, huge, artificial aspect, and will not assume the air of truth. Yet its chasms are strangely filled up with the costliest materials; a world, a universe of wit, and knowledge, and fancy, and imagination has sent its fairest products to adorn the edifice; the rude and rent Cyclopean walls are resplendent with jewels and beaten gold; rich stately foliage screens it, the balmiest odours encircle it; we stand astonished if not captivated, delighted if not charmed, by the artist and his art.'

With these views, so far as they go, we see little reason to disagree. There is doubtless a deeper meaning in the matter, but perhaps this is not the season for evolving it. To depict, with true scientific accuracy, the essential purport and character of Richter's genius and literary endeavour; how it originated, whither it tends, how it stands related to the general tendencies of the world in this age; above all, what is its worth and want of worth to ourselves,—may one day be a necessary problem; but, as matters actually stand,

would be a difficult and no very profitable one. The English public has not yet seen Richter; and must know him before it can judge him. For us, in the present circumstances, we hold it a more promising plan to exhibit some specimens of his workmanship itself, than to attempt describing it anew or better. The general outline of his intellectual aspect, as sketched in few words by the writer already quoted, may stand here by way of preface to these Extracts . as was the case above, whatever it may want, it contains nothing that we dissent from.

'To characterise Jean Paul's Works,' says he, 'would be difficult after the fullest inspection: to describe them to English readers would be next to impossible. Whether poetical, philosophical, didactic, fantastic, they seem all to be emblems, more or less complete, of the singular mind where they originated. As a whole, the first perusal of them, more particularly to a foreigner, is almost infallibly offensive; and neither their meaning nor their no-meaning is to be discerned without long and sedulous study. They are a tropical wilderness, full of endless tortuosities; but with the fairest flowers and the coolest fountains; now overarching us with high umbrageous gloom, now opening in long gorgeous vistas. We wander through them, enjoying their wild grandeur; and, by degrees, our half-contemptuous wonder at the Author passes into reverence and love. His face was long hid from us; but we see him at length in the firm shape of spiritual manhood; a vast and most singular nature, but vindicating his singular nature by the force, the beauty and benignity which pervade it. In fine, we joyfully accept him for what he is, and was meant to be. The graces, the polish, the sprightly elegancies which belong to men of lighter make, we cannot look for or demand from him. His movement is essentially slow and cumbrous, for he advances not with one faculty, but with a whole mind; with intellect, and pathos, and wit, and humour, and imagination, moving onward like a mighty host, motley, ponderous, irregular, irresistible. He is not airy, sparkling and precise: but deep, billowy and vast. The melody of his nature is not expressed in common notemarks, or written down by the critical gamut: for it is wild and manifold; its voice is like the voice of cataracts, and the sounding of primeval forests. To feeble ears it is discord; but to ears that understand it, deep majestic music.'[1]

As our first specimen, which also may serve for proof that

[1] *German Romance* (Cent. Ed.), vol. ii. p. 127.

Richter, in adopting his own extraordinary style, did it with clear knowledge of what excellence in style, and the various kinds and degrees of excellence therein, properly signified, we select, from his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (above mentioned and recommended), the following miniature sketches: the reader acquainted with the persons, will find these sentences, as we believe, strikingly descriptive and exact.

'Visit Herder's creations, where Greek life-freshness and Hindoo life-weariness are wonderfully blended: you walk, as it were, amid moonshine, into which the red dawn is already falling; but one hidden sun is the painter of both.'

'Similar, but more compacted into periods, is Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's vigorous, German-hearted prose; musical in every sense, for even his images are often derived from tones. The rare union between cutting force of intellectual utterance, and infinitude of sentiment, gives us the tense metallic chord with its soft tones.'

'In Goethe's prose, on the other hand, his fixedness of form gives us the Memnon's-tone. A plastic rounding, a pictorial determinateness, which even betrays the manual artist, make his works a fixed still gallery of figures and bronze statues.'

'Luther's prose is a half-battle; few deeds are equal to his words.'

'Klopstock's prose frequently evinces a sharpness of diction bordering on poverty of matter; a quality peculiar to Grammarians, who most of all know *distinctly*, but least of all know *much*. From want of matter, one is apt to think too much of language. New views of the world, like these other poets, Klopstock scarcely gave. Hence the naked winter-boughs, in his prose; the multitude of circumscribed propositions; the brevity; the return of the same small sharp-cut figures, for instance, of the Resurrection as of a Harvest-field.'

'The perfection of pomp-prose we find in Schiller: what the utmost splendour of reflection in images, in fulness and antithesis can give, he gives. Nay, often he plays on the poetic strings with so rich and jewel-loaded a hand, that the sparkling mass disturbs, if not the playing, yet our hearing of it.'[1]

That Richter's own playing and painting differed widely from all of these, the reader has already heard, and may now convince himself. Take, for example, the following of a fair-weather scene, selected from a thousand such that may be

[1] *Vorschule*, s. 545.

found in his writings; nowise as the best, but simply as the briefest. It is in the May season, the last evening of Spring:

'Such a May as the present (of 1794), Nature has not in the memory of man—begun; for this is but the fifteenth of it. People of reflection have long been vexed once every year, that our German singers should indite May-songs, since several other months deserve such a poetical Night-music better; and I myself have often gone so far as to adopt the idiom of our market-women, and instead of May butter to say June butter, as also June, March, April songs. But thou, kind May of this year, thou deservest to thyself all the songs which were ever made on thy rude namesakes!—By Heaven! when I now issue from the wavering chequered acacia-grove of the Castle, in which I am writing this Chapter, and come forth into the broad living light, and look up to the warming Heaven, and over its Earth budding out beneath it,—the Spring rises before me like a vast full cloud, with a splendour of blue and green. I see the sun standing amid roses in the western sky, into which he has *thrown his ray-brush wherewith he has today been painting the Earth*;—and when I look round a little in our picture-exhibition,—his enamelling is still hot on the mountains; on the moist chalk of the moist earth, the flowers, full of sap-colours, are laid out to dry, and the forget-me-not, with miniature colours; under the varnish of the streams the skyey Painter has pencilled his own eye; and the clouds, like a decoration-painter, he has touched-off with wild outlines and single tints; and so he stands at the border of the Earth, and looks back on his stately Spring, whose robe-folds are valleys, whose breast-bouquet is gardens, and whose blush is a vernal evening, and who, when she arises, will be—Summer!'[1]

Or the following, in which moreover are two happy living figures, a bridegroom and a bride on their marriage-day:

'He led her from the crowded dancing-room into the cool evening. Why does the evening, does the night, put warmer love in our hearts? Is it the nightly pressure of helplessness; or is it the exalting separation from the turmoils of life, that veiling of the world, in which for the soul nothing then remains but souls:—is it therefore that the letters in which the loved name stands written on our spirit appear, like phosphorus writing, by night, *on fire*, while by day in their *cloudy* traces they but smoke?

'He walked with his bride into the castle-garden: she hastened

[1] *German Romance* (Cent. Ed.), vol. ii., Fixlein, p. 297.

quickly through the Castle, and past its servants'-hall, where the fair flowers of her young life had been crushed broad and dry under a long dreary pressure; and her soul expanded and breathed in the free open garden, on whose flowery soil Destiny had cast forth the first seeds of the blossoms which today were gladdening her existence. Still Eden! Green, flower-chequered *chiaroscuro*!—The moon is sleeping under ground like a dead one; but beyond the garden the sun's red evening-clouds have fallen down like rose-leaves; and the evening-star, the brideman of the sun, hovers like a glancing butterfly above the rosy red, and, modest as a bride, deprives no single starlet of its light.'

'The wandering pair arrived at the old gardener's hut; now standing locked and dumb, with dark windows in the light garden, like a fragment of the Past surviving in the Present. Bared twigs of trees were folding, with clammy half-formed leaves, over the thick intertwisted tangles of the bushes. The Spring was standing, like a conqueror, with Winter at his feet. In the blue pond, now bloodless, a dusky evening-sky lay hollowed out; and the gushing waters were moistening the flower-beds. The silver sparks of stars were rising on the altar of the East, and falling down extinguished in the red-sea of the West.'

'The wind whirred, like a night-bird, louder through the trees; and gave tones to the acacia-grove, and the tones called to the pair who had first become happy within it: "Enter, new mortal pair, and think of what is past, and of my withering and your own; and be holy as Eternity, and weep, not for joy only, but for gratitude also!" * *

'They reached the blazing, rustling marriage-house, but their softened hearts sought stillness; and a foreign touch, as in the blossoming vine, would have disturbed the flower-nuptials of their souls. They turned rather, and winded up into the churchyard to preserve their mood. Majestic on the groves and mountains stood the Night before man's heart, and made it also great. Over the white steeple-obelisk, the sky rested bluer and darker; and behind it wavered the withered summit of the Maypole with faded flag. The son noticed his father's grave, on which the wind was opening and shutting with harsh noise the small lid on the metal cross, to let the year of his death be read on the brass plate within. An overpowering grief seized his heart with violent streams of tears, and drove him to the sunk hillock; and he led his bride to the grave, and said: "Here sleeps he, my good father; in his thirty-second year he was carried hither to his long rest. O thou good dear father, couldst thou today but see the happiness of thy son, like my mother! But thy eyes are empty, and thy breast is full of ashes, and thou seest us not."—He was silent. The bride wept aloud; she saw the mouldering coffins of her parents open, and the two dead arise, and look round for their daughter, who had stayed so long behind them, forsaken on the

earth. She fell on his neck and faltered: "O beloved, I have neither father nor mother, do not forsake me!"

'O thou who hast still a father and a mother, thank God for it on the day when thy soul is full of glad tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them. . . . . .

'And with this embracing at a father's grave, let this day of joy be holily concluded.'[1]

In such passages, slight as they are, we fancy an experienced eye will trace some features of originality, as well as of uncommonness; an open sense for Nature, a soft heart, a warm rich fancy, and here and there some under-current of Humour are distinctly enough discernible. Of this latter quality, which, as has been often said, forms Richter's grand characteristic, we would fain give our readers some correct notion; but see not well how it is to be done. Being genuine poetic humour, not drollery or vulgar caricature, it is like a fine essence, like a soul; we discover it only in whole works and delineations; as the soul is only to be seen in the living body, not in detached limbs and fragments. Richter's Humour takes a great variety of forms, some of them sufficiently grotesque and piebald; ranging from the light kindly-comic vein of Sterne in his *Trim* and *Uncle Toby* over all intermediate degrees, to the rugged grim farce-tragedy often manifested in Hogarth's pictures; nay, to still darker and wilder moods than this. Of the former sort are his characters of Fixlein, Schmelzle, Fibel: of the latter, his Vult, Giannozzo, Leibgeber, Schoppe, which last two are indeed one and the same. Of these, of the spirit that reigns in them, we should despair of giving other than the most inadequate and even incorrect idea, by any extracts or expositions that could possibly be furnished here. Not without reluctance we have accordingly renounced that enterprise; and must content ourselves with some 'Extra-leaf,' or other separable passage; which, if it afford no emblem of Richter's Humour, may be, in these circumstances, our best approximation to such. Of the 'Extra-leaves' in *Hesperus*

[1] *German Romance* (Cent. Ed.), vol. ii., Fixlein, p. 287.

itself, a considerable volume might be formed, and truly one of the strangest. Most of them, however, are national; could not be apprehended without a commentary; and even then, much to their disadvantage, for Humour must be seen, not through a glass, but face to face. The following is nowise one of the best; but it turns on what we believe is a quite European subject, at all events is certainly an English one.

'*Extra-leaf on Daughter-full Houses*

'The Minister's house was an open bookshop, the books in which (the daughters) you might read there, but could not take home with you. Though five other daughters were already standing in five private libraries, as wives, and one under the ground at Maienthal was sleeping off the child's-play of life, yet still in this daughter-warehouse there remained three gratis copies to be disposed of to good friends. The Minister was always prepared, in drawing from the office-lottery, to give his daughters as premiums to winners, and holders of the lucky ticket. Whom God gives an office, he also gives, if not sense for it, at least a wife. In a daughter-full house there must, as in the Church of St. Peter's, be *confessionals* for all nations, for all characters, for all faults; that the daughters may sit as confessoresses therein, and absolve from all, bachelorship only excepted. As a Natural-Philosopher, I have many times admired the wise methods of Nature for distributing daughters and plants: Is it not a fine arrangement, said I to the Natural-Historian Goeze, that Nature should have bestowed specially on young women, who for their growth require a rich mineralogical soil, some sort of hooking-apparatus, whereby to stick themselves on miserable marriage-cattle, that they may carry them to fat places? Thus Linnæus,[1] as you know, observes that such seeds as can flourish only in fat earth are furnished with barbs, and so fasten themselves the better on grazing quadrupeds, which transport them to stalls and dunghills. Strangely does Nature, by the wind,—which father and mother must raise,—scatter daughters and fir-seeds into the arable spots of the forest. Who does not remark the final cause here, and how Nature has equipped many a daughter with such and such charms, simply that some Peer, some mitred Abbot, Cardinal-deacon, appanaged Prince, or mere country Baron, may lay hold of said charmer, and in the character of Father or Brideman, hand her over ready-made to some gawk of the like sort, as a wife acquired by purchase? And do we find in bilberries a slighter attention on the part of Nature? Does not the same Linnæus notice, in

[1] 'His *Amæn. Acad.*—The treatise on the Habitable Globe.'

the same treatise, that they too are cased in a nutritive juice to incite the Fox to eat them; after which the villain,—digest them he cannot,—in such sort as he may, becomes their sower?—

'O, my heart is more in earnest than you think; the parents anger me who are soul-brokers; the daughters sadden me who are made slave-negresses.—Ah, is it wonderful that these, who, in their West-Indian marketplace, must dance, laugh, speak, sing, till some lord of a plantation take them home with him,—that these, I say, should be as slavishly treated as they are sold and bought? Ye poor lambs!—And yet ye too are as bad as your sale-mothers and sale-fathers.—what is one to do with his enthusiasm for your sex, when one travels through German towns, where every heaviest-pursed, every longest-titled individual, were he second cousin to the Devil himself, can point with his finger to thirty houses, and say: "I know not, shall it be from the pearl-coloured, or the nut-brown, or the steel-green house, that I wed; open to customers are they all!"—How, my girls! Is your heart so little worth that you cut it, like old clothes, after any fashion, to fit any breast; and does it wax or shrink, then, like a Chinese ball, to fit itself into the ball-mould and marriage-ringcase of any male heart whatever? "Well, it must; unless we would sit at home, and grow Old Maids," answer they; whom I will not answer, but turn scornfully away from them, to address that same Old Maid in these words:

' "Forsaken, but patient one; misknown and mistreated! Think not of the times when thou hadst hope of better than the present are, and repent the noble pride of thy heart never! It is not always our duty to marry, but it always is our duty to abide by right, not to purchase happiness by loss of honour, not to avoid unweddedness by untruthfulness. Lonely, unadmired heroine! in thy last hour, when all Life and the bygone possessions and scaffoldings of Life shall crumble to pieces, ready to fall down; in that hour thou wilt look back on thy untenanted life; no children, no husband, no wet eyes will be there; but in the empty dusk one high, pure, angelic, smiling, beaming Figure, godlike and mounting to the Godlike, will hover, and beckon thee to mount with her;—mount thou with her, the Figure is thy Virtue."'

We have spoken above, and warmly, of Jean Paul's Imagination, of his high devout feeling, which it were now a still more grateful part of our task to exhibit. But in this also our readers must content themselves with some imperfect glimpses. What religious opinions and aspirations he specially entertained, how that noblest portion of man's interest represented itself in such a mind, were long to describe, did

we even know it with certainty. He hints somewhere that 'the soul, which by nature looks Heavenward, is without a Temple in this age'; in which little sentence the careful reader will decipher much.

'But there will come another era,' says Paul, 'when it shall be light, and man will awaken from his lofty dreams, and find—his dreams still there, and that nothing is gone save his sleep.

'The stones and rocks, which two veiled Figures (Necessity and Vice), like Deucalion and Pyrrha, are casting behind them at Goodness, will themselves become men.

'And on the Western-gate (*Abendthor*, evening-gate) of this century stands written: Here is the way to Virtue and Wisdom; as on the Western-gate at Cherson stands the proud Inscription: Here is the way to Byzance.

'Infinite Providence, Thou wilt cause the day to dawn.

'But as yet struggles the twelfth-hour of the Night: nocturnal birds of prey are on the wing, spectres uproar, the dead walk, the living dream.'[1]

Connected with this, there is one other piece, which also, for its singular poetic qualities, we shall translate here. The reader has heard much of Richter's Dreams, with what strange prophetic power he rules over that chaos of spiritual Nature, bodying forth a whole world of Darkness, broken by pallid gleams or wild sparkles of light, and peopled with huge, shadowy, bewildered shapes, full of grandeur and meaning. No Poet known to us, not Milton himself, shows such a vastness of Imagination; such a rapt, deep, Old-Hebrew spirit as Richter in these scenes. He mentions, in his Biographical Notes, the impression which these lines of the *Tempest* had on him, as recited by one of his companions:

> 'We are such stuff
> As Dreams are made of, and our little Life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

'The passage of Shakspeare,' says he, '*rounded with a sleep* (*mit Schlaf umgeben*), in Plattner's mouth, created whole books in me.'—The following Dream is perhaps his grandest,

[1] *Hesperus*: Preface.

as undoubtedly it is among his most celebrated. We shall give it entire, long as it is, and therewith finish our quotations. What value he himself put on it, may be gathered from the following Note: 'If ever my heart,' says he, 'were to grow so wretched and so dead that all feelings in it which announce the being of a God were extinct there, I would terrify myself with this sketch of mine; it would heal me, and give me my feelings back.' We translate from *Siebenkäs*, where it forms the first Chapter, or *Blumenstück* (Flower-Piece):—

'The purpose of this Fiction is the excuse of its boldness. Men deny the Divine Existence with as little feeling as the most assert it. Even in our true systems we go on collecting mere words, play-marks and medals, as misers do coins; and not till late do we transform the words into feelings, the coins into enjoyments. A man may, for twenty years, believe the Immortality of the Soul;—in the one-and-twentieth, in some great moment, he for the first time discovers with amazement the rich meaning of this belief, the warmth of this Naphtha-well.

'Of such sort, too, was my terror, at the poisonous stifling vapour which floats out round the heart of him who for the first time enters the school of Atheism. I could with less pain deny Immortality than Deity: there I should lose but a world covered with mists, here I should lose the present world, namely the Sun thereof: the whole spiritual Universe is dashed asunder by the hand of Atheism into numberless quicksilver-points of *Me's*, which glitter, run, waver, fly together or asunder, without unity or continuance. No one in Creation is so alone, as the denier of God; he mourns, with an orphaned heart that has lost its great Father, by the Corpse of Nature, which no World-spirit moves and holds together, and which grows in its grave; and he mourns by that Corpse till he himself crumble off from it. The whole world lies before him, like the Egyptian Sphinx of stone, half-buried in the sand; and the All is the cold iron mask of a formless Eternity. * * *

'I merely remark farther, that with the belief of Atheism, the belief of Immortality is quite compatible; for the same Necessity, which in this Life threw my light dewdrop of a *Me* into a flower-bell and—under a Sun, can repeat that process in a second life; nay, more easily embody me the second time than the first.

'If we hear, in childhood, that the Dead, about midnight, when our *sleep reaches near the soul*, and darkens even our dreams, awake out of

theirs, and in the church mimic the worship of the living, we shudder at Death by reason of the dead, and in the night-solitude turn away our eyes from the long silent windows of the church, and fear to search in their gleaming, whether it proceed from the moon.

'Childhood, and rather its terrors than its raptures, take wings and radiance again in dreams, and sport like fire-flies in the little night of the soul. Crush not these flickering sparks!—Leave us even our dark painful dreams as higher half-shadows of reality!—And wherewith will you replace to us *those* dreams, which bear us away from under the tumult of the waterfall into the still heights of childhood, where the stream of life yet ran silent in its little plain, and flowed towards its abysses, a mirror of the Heaven?—

'I was lying once, on a summer evening, in the sunshine; and I fell asleep. Methought I awoke in the Churchyard. The down-rolling wheels of the steeple-clock, which was striking eleven, had awakened me. In the emptied night-heaven I looked for the Sun; for I thought an eclipse was veiling him with the Moon. All the Graves were open, and the iron doors of the charnel-house were swinging to and fro by invisible hands. On the walls flitted shadows, which proceeded from no one, and other shadows stretched upwards in the pale air. In the open coffins none now lay sleeping but the children. Over the whole heaven hung, in large folds, a grey sultry mist; which a giant shadow, like vapour, was drawing down, nearer, closer and hotter. Above me I heard the distant fall of avalanches; under me the first step of a boundless earthquake. The Church wavered up and down with two interminable Dissonances, which struggled with each other in it; endeavouring in vain to mingle in unison. At times, a grey glimmer hovered along the windows, and under it the lead and iron fell down molten. The net of the mist, and the tottering Earth brought me into that hideous Temple; at the door of which, in two poison-bushes, two glittering Basilisks lay brooding. I passed through unknown Shadows, on whom ancient centuries were impressed.—All the Shadows were standing round the empty Altar; and in all, not the heart, but the breast quivered and pulsed. One dead man only, who had just been buried there, still lay on his coffin without quivering breast; and on his smiling countenance stood a happy dream. But at the entrance of one Living, he awoke, and smiled no longer; he lifted his heavy eyelids, but within was no eye; and in his beating breast there lay, instead of a heart, a wound. He held up his hands and folded them to pray; but the arms lengthened out and dissolved; and the hands, still folded together, fell away. Above, on the Church-dome, stood the dial-plate of *Eternity*, whereon no number appeared, and which was its own index: but a black finger pointed thereon, and the Dead sought to see the time by it.

'Now sank from aloft a noble, high Form, with a look of uneffaceable sorrow, down to the Altar, and all the Dead cried out, "Christ! is there no God?" He answered, "There is none!" The whole Shadow of each then shuddered, not the breast alone; and one after the other, all, in this shuddering, shook into pieces.

'Christ continued: "I went through the Worlds, I mounted into the Suns, and flew with the Galaxies through the wastes of Heaven; but there is no God! I descended as far as Being casts its shadow, and looked down into the Abyss and cried, Father, where art thou? But I heard only the everlasting storm which no one guides, and the gleaming Rainbow of Creation hung without a Sun that made it, over the Abyss, and trickled down. And when I looked up to the immeasurable world for the Divine *Eye*, it glared on me with an empty, black, bottomless *Eye-socket*; and Eternity lay upon Chaos, eating it and ruminating it. Cry on, ye Dissonances; cry away the Shadows, for He is not!"

'The pale-grown Shadows flitted away, as white vapour which frost has formed with the warm breath disappears; and all was void. O, then came, fearful for the heart, the dead Children who had been awakened in the Churchyard into the Temple, and cast themselves before the high Form on the Altar, and said, "Jesus, have we no Father?" And he answered, with streaming tears, "We are all orphans, I and you: we are without Father!"

'Then shrieked the Dissonances still louder,—the quivering walls of the Temple parted asunder; and the Temple and the Children sank down, and the whole Earth and the Sun sank after it, and the whole Universe sank with its immensity before us; and above, on the summit of immeasurable Nature, stood Christ, and gazed down into the Universe chequered with its thousand Suns, as into the Mine bored out of the Eternal Night, in which the Suns run like mine-lamps, and the Galaxies like silver veins.

'And as he saw the grinding press of Worlds, the torch-dance of celestial wildfires, and the coral-banks of beating hearts; and as he saw how world after world shook off its glimmering souls upon the Sea of Death, as a water-bubble scatters swimming lights on the waves, then majestic as the Highest of the Finite, he raised his eyes towards the Nothingness, and towards the void Immensity, and said: "Dead, dumb Nothingness! Cold, everlasting Necessity! Frantic Chance! Know ye what this is that lies beneath you? When will ye crush the Universe in pieces, and me? Chance, knowest thou what thou doest, when with thy hurricanes thou walkest through that snow-powder of Stars, and extinguishest Sun after Sun, and that sparkling dew of heavenly lights goes out as thou passest over it? How is each so solitary in this wide grave of the All! I am alone with myself! O Father, O Father!

where is thy infinite bosom, that I might rest on it? Ah, if each soul is its own father and creator, why cannot it be its own destroyer too?

'"Is this beside me yet a Man? Unhappy one! Your little life is the sigh of Nature, or only its echo; a convex-mirror throws its rays into that dust-cloud of dead men's ashes down on the Earth; and thus you, cloud-formed wavering phantasms, arise.—Look down into the Abyss, over which clouds of ashes are moving; mists full of Worlds reek up from the Sea of Death; the *Future* is a mounting mist, and the *Present* is a falling one.—Knowest thou thy Earth again?"

'Here Christ looked down, and his eyes filled with tears, and he said: "Ah, I was once there; I was still happy then; I had still my Infinite Father, and looked up cheerfully from the mountains into the immeasurable Heaven, and pressed my mangled breast on his healing form, and said, even in the bitterness of death: Father, take thy son from this bleeding hull, and lift him to thy heart!—Ah, ye too happy inhabitants of Earth, ye still believe in *Him*. Perhaps even now your Sun is going down, and ye kneel amid blossoms, and brightness, and tears, and lift trustful hands, and cry with joy-streaming eyes to the opened Heaven: 'Me too thou knowest, Omnipotent, and all my wounds; and at death thou receivest me, and closest them all!' Unhappy creatures, at death they will not be closed! Ah, when the sorrow-laden lays himself, with galled back, into the Earth, to sleep till a fairer Morning full of Truth, full of Virtue and Joy,—he awakens in a stormy Chaos, in the everlasting Midnight,—and there comes no Morning, and no soft healing hand, and no Infinite Father!—Mortal, beside me! if thou still livest, pray to *Him*; else hast thou lost him forever!"

'And as I fell down, and looked into the sparkling Universe, I saw the upborne Rings of the Giant-Serpent, the Serpent of Eternity, which had coiled itself round the All of Worlds,—and the Rings sank down, and encircled the All doubly; and then it wound itself, innumerable ways, round Nature, and swept the Worlds from their places, and crashing, squeezed the Temple of Immensity together, into the Church of a Burying-ground,—and all grew strait, dark, fearful,—and an immeasurably-extended Hammer was to strike the last hour of Time, and shiver the Universe asunder, . . . WHEN I AWOKE.

'My soul wept for joy that I could still pray to God; and the joy, and the weeping, and the faith on him were my prayer. And as I arose, the Sun was glowing deep behind the full purpled corn-ears, and casting meekly the gleam of its twilight-red on the little Moon, which was rising in the East without an Aurora; and between the sky and the earth, a gay transient air-people was stretching out its short wings, and living, as I did, before the Infinite Father; and from all Nature around me flowed peaceful tones as from distant evening-bells.'

Without commenting on this singular piece, we must here for the present close our lucubrations on Jean Paul. To delineate, with any correctness, the specific features of such a genius, and of its operations and results in the great variety of provinces where it dwelt and worked, were a long task; for which, perhaps, some groundwork may have been laid here, and which, as occasion serves, it will be pleasant for us to resume.

Probably enough our readers, in considering these strange matters, will too often bethink them of that 'Episode concerning Paul's Costume'; and conclude that, as in living, so in writing, he was a Mannerist, and man of continual Affectations. We will not quarrel with them on this point; we must not venture among the intricacies it would lead us into. At the same time, we hope many will agree with us in honouring Richter, such as he was; and 'in spite of his hundred real, and his ten thousand seeming faults,' discern under this wondrous guise the spirit of a true Poet and Philosopher. A Poet, and among the highest of his time, we must reckon him, though he wrote no verses; a Philosopher, though he promulgated no systems: for, on the whole, that 'Divine Idea of the World' stood in clear ethereal light before his mind; he recognised the Invisible, even under the mean forms of these days, and with a high, strong not uninspired heart, strove to represent it in the Visible, and publish tidings of it to his fellow-men. This one virtue, the foundation of all the other virtues, and which a long study more and more clearly reveals to us in Jean Paul, will cover far greater sins than his were. It raises him into quite another sphere than that of the thousand elegant Sweet-singers, and cause-and-effect *Philosophes*, in his own country or in this; the million Novel-manufacturers, Sketchers, practical Discoursers and so forth, not once reckoned in. Such a man we can safely recommend to universal study; and for those who, in the actual state of matters, may the most blame him, repeat the old maxim: 'What is extraordinary, try to look at with your own eyes.'

LUTHER'S PSALM[1]

[1831]

Among Luther's Spiritual Songs, of which various collections have appeared of late years,[2] the one entitled *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott* is universally regarded as the best; and indeed still retains its place and devotional use in the Psalmodies of Protestant Germany. Of the Tune, which also is by Luther, we have no copy, and only a secondhand knowledge: to the original Words, probably never before printed in England, we subjoin the following Translation; which, if it possess the only merit it can pretend to, that of literal adherence to the sense, will not prove unacceptable to our readers. Luther's music is heard daily in our churches, several of our finest Psalm-tunes being of his composition. Luther's sentiments also are, or should be, present in many an English heart; the more interesting to us is any the smallest articulate expression of these.

The great Reformer's love of music, of poetry, it has often been remarked, is one of the most significant features in his character. But indeed, if every great man, Napoleon himself, is intrinsically a poet, an idealist, with more or less completeness of utterance, which of all our great men, in these modern ages, had such an endowment in that kind as Luther? He it was, emphatically, who stood based on the Spiritual World of man, and only by the footing and

[1] Fraser's Magazine, No. 12.

[2] For example: *Luthers Geistliche Lieder, nebst dessen Gedanken über die Musica* (Berlin, 1817); *Die Lieder Luthers gesammelt von Kosegarten und Rambach, etc.*

miraculous power he had obtained there, could work such changes in the Material World. As a participant and dispenser of divine influences, he shows himself among human affairs; a true connecting medium and visible Messenger between Heaven and Earth; a man, therefore, not only permitted to enter the sphere of Poetry, but to dwell in the purest centre thereof: perhaps the most inspired of all Teachers since the first Apostles of his faith; and thus not a Poet only, but a Prophet and god-ordained Priest, which is the highest form of that dignity, and of all dignity.

Unhappily, or happily, Luther's poetic feeling did not so much learn to express itself in fit Words that take captive every ear, as in fit Actions, wherein truly, under still more impressive manifestation, the spirit of spheral melody resides, and still audibly addresses us. In his written Poems we find little, save that strength of one 'whose words,' it has been said, 'were half battles'; little of that still harmony and blending softness of union, which is the last perfection of strength; less of it than even his conduct often manifested. With Words he had not learned to make pure music; it was by Deeds of love or heroic valour that he spoke freely; in tones, only through his Flute, amid tears, could the sigh of that strong soul find utterance.

Nevertheless, though in imperfect articulation, the same voice, if we will listen well, is to be heard also in his writings, in his Poems. The following, for example, jars upon our ears: yet there is something in it like the sound of Alpine avalanches, or the first murmur of earthquakes; in the very vastness of which dissonance a higher unison is revealed to us. Luther wrote this Song in a time of blackest threatenings, which however could in nowise become a time of despair. In those tones, rugged, broken as they are, do we not recognise the accent of that summoned man (summoned not by Charles the Fifth, but by God Almighty also), who answered his friends' warning not to enter Worms, in this wise: "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are roof-tiles,

I would on";—of him who, alone in that assemblage, before all emperors and principalities and powers, spoke forth these final and forever memorable words: "It is neither safe nor prudent to do aught against conscience. Here stand I, I cannot otherwise. God assist me. Amen!"[1] It is evident enough that to this man all Pope's Conclaves, and Imperial Diets, and hosts, and nations, were but weak; weak as the forest, with all its strong *trees*, may be to the smallest spark of electric *fire*.

EINE FESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT

Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott,
Ein gutes Wehr und Waffen;
Er hilft uns frey aus aller Noth,
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.
Der alte böse Feind
Mit Ernst ers jetzt meint;
Gross Macht und viel List
Sein grausam' Rüstzeuch ist,
Auf Erd'n ist nicht seins Gleichen.

Mit unsrer Macht ist Nichts gethan,
Wir sind gar bald verloren:
Es streit't für uns der rechte Mann,
Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.
Fragst du wer er ist?
Er heisst Jesus Christ,
Der Herre Zebaoth,
Und ist kein ander Gott,
Das Feld muss er behalten.

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär,
Und wollt'n uns gar verschlingen,
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,
Es soll uns doch gelingen.
Der Fürste dieser Welt,

[1] 'Till such time as, either by proofs from Holy Scripture, or by fair reason or argument, I have been confuted and convicted, I cannot and will not recant, *weil weder sicher noch gerathen ist, etwas wider Gewissen zu thun. Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mir. Amen!*'

Wie sauer er sich stellt,
Thut er uns doch Nichts;
Das macht er ist gerichtt,
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn,
Und keinen Dank dazu haben;
Er ist bey uns wohl auf dem Plan
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,
Gut', Ehr', Kind und Weib,
Lass fahren dahin.
Sie haben's kein Gewinn,
Das Reich Gottes muss uns bleiben.

A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He 'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient Prince of Hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of Craft and Power
He weareth in this hour,
On Earth is not his fellow.

With force of arms we nothing can,
Full soon were we down-ridden;
But for us fights the proper Man,
Whom God himself hath bidden.
Ask ye, Who is this same?
Christ Jesus is his name,
The Lord Zebaoth's Son,
He and no other one
Shall conquer in the battle.

And were this world all Devils o'er
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore,
Not they can overpower us.
And let the Prince of Ill
Look grim as e'er he will,
He harms us not a whit:
For why? his doom is writ,
A word shall quickly slay him.

God's Word, for all their craft and force,
One moment will not linger,
But spite of Hell, shall have its course,
'Tis written by his finger.
And though they take our life,
Goods, honour, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small;
These things shall vanish all,
The City of God remaineth.

SCHILLER[1]

[1831]

To the student of German Literature, or of Literature in general, these Volumes, purporting to lay open the private intercourse of two men eminent beyond all others of their time in that department, will doubtless be a welcome appearance. Neither Schiller nor Goethe has ever, that we have hitherto seen, written worthlessly on any subject; and the writings here offered us are confidential Letters, relating moreover to a highly important period in the spiritual history, not only of the parties themselves, but of their country likewise; full of topics, high and low, on which far meaner talents than theirs might prove interesting. We have heard and known so much of both these venerated persons; of their friendship, and true coöperation in so many noble endeavours, the fruit of which has long been plain to every one: and now are we to look into the secret constitution and conditions of all this; to trace the public result, which is Ideal, down to its roots in the Common; how Poets may live and work poetically among the Prose things of this world, and *Fausts* and *Tells* be written on rag-paper and with goose-quills, like mere Minerva Novels, and songs by a Person of Quality! Virtuosos have glass bee-hives, which they curiously peep into; but here truly were a far stranger sort of honey-making. Nay, apart from virtuososhiip, or any technical object, what a hold have such things on our universal curiosity as men! If the sympathy

[1] FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 14.—*Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe, in den Jahren* 1794 *bis* 1805 (Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe, in the years 1794-1805). 1st-3d Volumes (1794-1797). Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1828-9.

we feel with one another is infinite, or nearly so,—in proof of which, do but consider the boundless ocean of Gossip (imperfect, undistilled Biography) which is emitted and imbibed by the human species daily;—if every secret-history, every closed-doors conversation, how trivial soever, has an interest for us; then might the conversation of a Schiller with a Goethe, so rarely do Schillers meet with Goethes among us, tempt Honesty itself into eavesdropping.

Unhappily the conversation flits away forever with the hour that witnessed it; and the Letter and Answer, frank, lively, genial as they may be, are only a poor emblem and epitome of it. The living dramatic movement is gone; nothing but the cold historical net-product remains for us. It is true, in every confidential Letter, the writer will, in some measure, more or less directly depict himself: but nowhere is Painting, by pen or pencil, so inadequate as in delineating Spiritual Nature. The Pyramid can be measured in geometric feet, and the draughtsman represents it, with all its environment, on canvas, accurately to the eye; nay, Mont-Blanc is embossed in coloured stucco; and we have his very type, and miniature facsimile, in our museums. But for great Men, let him who would know such, pray that he may see them daily face to face: for in the dim distance, and by the eye of the imagination, our vision, do what we may, will be too imperfect. How pale, thin, ineffectual do the great figures we would fain summon from History rise before us! Scarcely as palpable men does our utmost effort body them forth; oftenest only like Ossian's ghosts, in hazy twilight, with 'stars dim twinkling through their forms.' Our Socrates, our Luther, after all that we have talked and argued of them, are to most of us quite invisible; the Sage of Athens, the Monk of Eisleben; not Persons, but Titles. Yet such men, far more than any Alps or Coliseums, are the true world-wonders, which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint forever on our remembrance. Great men are the Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind; they stand as heavenly

Signs, everliving witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied Possibilities of human nature; which greatness he who has never seen, or rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself forever doomed to be little. How many weighty reasons, how many innocent allurements attract our curiosity to such men! We would know them, see them visibly, even as we know and see our like: no hint, no notice that concerns them is superfluous or too small for us. Were Gulliver's Conjuror but here, to recall and sensibly bring back the brave Past, that we might look into it, and scrutinise it at will! But alas, in Nature there is no such conjuring: the great spirits that have gone before us can survive only as disembodied Voices; their form and distinctive aspect, outward and even in many respects inward, all whereby they were known as living, breathing men, has passed into another sphere; from which only History, in scanty memorials, can evoke some faint resemblance of it. The more precious, in spite of all imperfections, is such History, are such memorials, that still in some degree preserve what had otherwise been lost without recovery.

For the rest, as to the maxim, often enough inculcated on us, that close inspection will abate our admiration, that only the obscure can be sublime, let us put small faith in it. Here, as in other provinces, it is not knowledge, but a little knowledge, that puffeth up, and for wonder at the thing known substitutes mere wonder at the knower thereof: to a sciolist the starry heavens revolving in dead mechanism may be less than a Jacob's vision; but to the Newton they are more; for the same God still dwells enthroned there, and holy Influences, like Angels, still ascend and descend; and this clearer vision of a little but renders the remaining mystery the deeper and more divine. So likewise is it with true spiritual greatness. On the whole, that theory of 'no man being a hero to his valet,' carries us but a little way into the real nature of the case. With a superficial meaning which is

plain enough, it essentially holds good only of such heroes as are false, or else of such valets as are too genuine, as are shoulder-knotted and brass-lacquered in soul as well as in body: of other sorts it does not hold. Milton was still a hero to the good Elwood. But we dwell not on that mean doctrine, which, true or false, may be left to itself the more safely, as in practice it is of little or no immediate import. For were it never so true, yet unless we preferred huge bugbears to small realities, our practical course were still the same: to inquire, to investigate by all methods, till we saw clearly.

What worth in this biographical point of view the *Correspondence of Schiller and Goethe* may have, we shall not attempt determining here; the rather as only a portion of the Work, and to judge by the space of time included in it, only a small portion, is yet before us. Nay, perhaps its full worth will not become apparent till a future age, when the persons and concerns it treats of shall have assumed their proper relative magnitude, and stand disencumbered, and forever separated from contemporary trivialities, which, for the present, with their hollow transient bulk, so mar our estimate. Two centuries ago, Leicester and Essex might be the wonders of England; their Kenilworth Festivities and Cadiz Expeditions seemed the great occurrences of that day;—but what would we now give, were these all forgotten, and some 'Correspondence between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson' suddenly brought to light!

One valuable quality these Letters of Schiller and Goethe everywhere exhibit, that of truth: whatever we do learn from them, whether in the shape of fact or of opinion, may be relied on as genuine. There is a tone of entire sincerity in that style: a constant natural courtesy nowhere obstructs the right freedom of word or thought; indeed, no ends but honourable ones, and generally of a mutual interest, are before either party; thus neither needs to veil, still less to mask himself from the other; the two self-portraits, so far as

they are filled up, may be looked upon as real likenesses. Perhaps, to most readers, some larger intermixture of what we should call domestic interest, of ordinary human concerns, and the hopes, fears and other feelings these excite, would have improved the Work; which as it is, not indeed without pleasant exceptions, turns mostly on compositions, and publications, and philosophies, and other such high matters. This, we believe, is a rare fault in modern Correspondences; where generally the opposite fault is complained of, and except mere temporalities, good and evil hap of the corresponding parties, their state of purse, heart and nervous system, and the moods and humours these give rise to,—little stands recorded for us. It may be, too, that native readers will feel such a want less than foreigners do, whose curiosity in this instance is equally minute, and to whom so many details, familiar enough in the country itself, must be unknown. At all events, it is to be remembered that Schiller and Goethe are, in strict speech, Literary Men; for whom their social life is only as the dwelling-place and outward tabernacle of their spiritual life; which latter is the one thing needful; the other, except in subserviency to this, meriting no attention, or the least possible. Besides, as cultivated men, perhaps even by natural temper, they are not in the habit of yielding to violent emotions of any kind, still less of unfolding and depicting such, by letter, even to closest intimates; a turn of mind, which, if it diminished the warmth of their epistolary intercourse, must have increased their private happiness, and so by their friends can hardly be regretted. He who wears his heart on his sleeve, will often have to lament aloud that daws peck at it: he who does not, will spare himself such lamenting. Of Rousseau Confessions, whatever value we assign that sort of ware, there is no vestige in this Correspondence.

Meanwhile, many cheerful, honest little domestic touches are given here and there; which we can accept gladly, with no worse censure than wishing that there had been more. But this Correspondence has another and more proper aspect

under which, if rightly considered, it possesses a far higher interest than most domestic delineations could have imparted. It shows us two high, creative, truly poetic minds, unweariedly cultivating themselves, unweariedly advancing from one measure of strength and clearness to another; whereby to such as travel, we say not on the same road, for this few can do, but in the same direction, as all should do, the richest psychological and practical lesson is laid out; from which men of every intellectual degree may learn something, and he that is of the highest degree will probably learn the most. What value lies in this lesson, moreover, may be expected to increase in an increasing ratio as the Correspondence proceeds, and a larger space, with broader differences of advancement, comes into view; especially as respects Schiller, the younger and more susceptive of the two; for whom, in particular, these eleven years may be said to comprise the most important era of his culture; indeed, the whole history of his progress therein, from the time when he first found the right path, and properly became progressive.

But to enter farther on the merits and special qualities of these Letters, which, on all hands, will be regarded as a publication of real value, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is not our task now. Of the frank, kind, mutually-respectful relation that manifests itself between the two Correspondents; of their several epistolary styles, and the worth of each, and whatever else characterises this Work as a series of biographical documents, or of philosophical views, we may at some future period have occasion to speak: certain detached speculations and indications will of themselves come before us in the course of our present undertaking. Meanwhile, to British readers, the chief object is not the Letters, but the Writers of them. Of Goethe the public already know something: of Schiller less is known, and our wish is to bring him into closer approximation with our readers.

Indeed, had we considered only his importance in German, or we may now say, in European Literature, Schiller might

well have demanded an earlier notice in our Journal. As a man of true poetical and philosophical genius, who proved this high endowment both in his conduct, and by a long series of Writings which manifest it to all; nay, even as a man so eminently admired by his nation, while he lived, and whose fame, there and abroad, during the twenty-five years since his decease, has been constantly expanding and confirming itself, he appears with such claims as can belong only to a small number of men. If we have seemed negligent of Schiller, want of affection was nowise the cause. Our admiration for him is of old standing, and has not abated, as it ripened into calm loving estimation. But to English expositors of Foreign Literature, at this epoch, there will be many more pressing duties than that of expounding Schiller. To a considerable extent, Schiller may be said to expound himself. His greatness is of a simple kind; his manner of displaying it is, for most part, apprehensible to every one. Besides, of all German Writers, ranking in any such class as his, Klopstock scarcely excepted, he has the least nationality: his character indeed is German, if German mean true, earnest, nobly-humane; but his mode of thought, and mode of utterance, all but the mere vocables of it, are European.

Accordingly it is to be observed, no German Writer has had such acceptance with foreigners; has been so instantaneously admitted into favour, at least any favour which proved permanent. Among the French, for example, Schiller is almost naturalised; translated, commented upon, by men of whom Constant is one; even brought upon the stage, and by a large class of critics vehemently extolled there. Indeed, to the Romanticist class, in all countries, Schiller is naturally the pattern man and great master; as it were, a sort of ambassador and mediator, were mediation possible, between the Old School and the New; pointing to his own Works, as to a glittering bridge, that will lead pleasantly from the Versailles gardening and artificial hydraulics of the one, into the true Ginnistan and Wonderland of the other. With ourselves

too, who are troubled with no controversies on Romanticism and Classicism,—the Bowles controversy on Pope having long since evaporated without result, and all critical guild-brethren now working diligently, with one accord, in the calmer sphere of Vapidism or even Nullism,—Schiller is no less universally esteemed by persons of any feeling for poetry. To readers of German, and these are increasing everywhere a hundred-fold, he is one of the earliest studies; and the dullest cannot study him without some perception of his beauties. For the Un-German, again, we have Translations in abundance and superabundance; through which, under whatever distortion, however shorn of his beams, some image of this poetical sun must force itself; and in susceptive hearts awaken love, and a desire for more immediate insight. So that now, we suppose, anywhere in England, a man who denied that Schiller was a Poet would himself be, from every side, declared a Prosaist, and thereby summarily enough put to silence.

All which being so, the weightiest part of our duty, that of preliminary pleading for Schiller, of asserting rank and excellence for him while a stranger, and to judges suspicious of counterfeits, is taken off our hands. The knowledge of his works is silently and rapidly proceeding; in the only way by which true knowledge can be attained, by loving study of them in many an inquiring, candid mind. Moreover, as remarked above, Schiller's works, generally speaking, require little commentary: for a man of such excellence, for a true Poet, we should say that his worth lies singularly open; nay, in great part of his writings, beyond such open, universally recognisable worth, there is no other to be sought.

Yet doubtless if he is a Poet, a genuine interpreter of the Invisible, Criticism will have a greater duty to discharge for him. Every Poet, be his outward lot what it may, finds himself born in the midst of Prose; he has to struggle from the littleness and obstruction of an Actual world, into the freedom and infinitude of an Ideal; and the history of such struggle, which is the history of his life, cannot be other than instruc-

tive. His is a high, laborious, unrequited, or only self-requited endeavour; which, however, by the law of his being, he is compelled to undertake, and must prevail in, or be permanently wretched; nay, the more wretched, the nobler his gifts are. For it is the deep, inborn claim of his whole spiritual nature, and will not and must not go unanswered. His youthful unrest, that 'unrest of genius,' often so wayward in its character, is the dim anticipation of this; the mysterious, all-powerful mandate, as from Heaven, to prepare himself, to purify himself, for the vocation wherewith he is called. And yet how few can fulfil this mandate, how few earnestly give heed to it! Of the thousand jingling dilettanti, whose jingle dies with the hour which it harmlessly or hurtfully amused, we say nothing here: to these, as to the mass of men, such calls for spiritual perfection speak only in whispers, drowned without difficulty in the din and dissipation of the world. But even for the Byron, for the Burns, whose ear is quick for celestial messages, in whom 'speaks the prophesying spirit,' in awful prophetic voice, how hard is it to 'take no counsel with flesh and blood,' and instead of living and writing for the Day that passes over them, live and write for the Eternity that rests and abides over them; instead of living commodiously in the Half, the Reputable, the Plausible, 'to live resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True!'[1] Such Halfness, such halting between two opinions, such painful, altogether fruitless negotiating between Truth and Falsehood, has been the besetting sin, and chief misery, of mankind in all ages. Nay, in our age, it has christened itself Moderation, a prudent taking of the middle course; and passes current among us as a virtue. How virtuous it is, the withered condition of many a once ingenuous nature that has lived by this method; the broken or breaking heart of many a noble nature that could not live by it,—speak aloud, did we but listen.

And now when, from among so many shipwrecks and misventures, one goodly vessel comes to land, we joyfully

[1] *Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben.* Goethe.

survey its rich cargo, and hasten to question the crew on the fortunes of their voyage. Among the crowd of uncultivated and miscultivated writers, the high, pure Schiller stands before us with a like distinction. We ask: How was this man successful? from what peculiar point of view did he attempt penetrating the secret of spiritual Nature? From what region of Prose rise into Poetry? Under what outward accidents; with what inward faculties; by what methods; with what result?

For any thorough or final answer to such questions, it is evident enough, neither our own means, nor the present situation of our readers in regard to this matter, are in any measure adequate. Nevertheless, the imperfect beginning must be made before the perfect result can appear. Some slight far-off glance over the character of the man, as he looked and lived, in Action and in Poetry, will not, perhaps, be unacceptable from us: for such as know little of Schiller, it may be an opening of the way to better knowledge; for such as are already familiar with him, it may be a stating in words of what they themselves have often thought, and welcome, therefore, as the confirming testimony of a second witness.

Of Schiller's personal history there are accounts in various accessible publications; so that, we suppose, no formal Narrative of his Life, which may now be considered generally known, is necessary here. Such as are curious on the subject, and still uninformed, may find some satisfaction in the *Life of Schiller* (London, 1825); in the *Vie de Schiller*, prefixed to the French Translation of his Dramatic Works; in the *Account of Schiller*, prefixed to the English Translation of his Thirty-Years War (Edinburgh, 1828); and, doubtless, in many other Essays, known to us only by title. Nay, in the survey we propose to make of his character, practical as well as speculative, the main facts of his outward history will of themselves come to light.

Schiller's Life is emphatically a literary one; that of a

man existing only for Contemplation; guided forward by the pursuit of ideal things, and seeking and finding his true welfare therein. A singular simplicity characterises it, a remoteness from whatever is called business; an aversion to the tumults of business, an indifference to its prizes, grows with him from year to year. He holds no office; scarcely for a little while a University Professorship; he covets no promotion; has no stock of money; and shows no discontent with these arrangements. Nay, when permanent sickness, continual pain of body, is added to them, he still seems happy: these last fifteen years of his life are, spiritually considered, the clearest and most productive of all. We might say, there is something priest-like in that Life of his: under quite another colour and environment, yet with aims differing in form rather than in essence, it has a priest-like stillness, a priest-like purity; nay, if for the Catholic Faith we substitute the Ideal of Art, and for Convent Rules, Moral or Æsthetic Laws, it has even something of a monastic character. By the three monastic vows he was not bound: yet vows of as high and difficult a kind, both to do and to forbear, he had taken on him; and his happiness and whole business lay in observing them. Thus immured, not in cloisters of stone and mortar, yet in cloisters of the mind, which separate him as impassably from the vulgar, he works and meditates only on what we may call Divine things; his familiar task, his very recreations, the whole actings and fancyings of his daily existence, tend thither.

As in the life of a Holy Man too, so in that of Schiller, there is but one great epoch: that of taking on him these Literary Vows; of finally extricating himself from the distractions of the world, and consecrating his whole future days to Wisdom. What lies before this epoch, and what lies after it, have two altogether different characters. The former is worldly, and occupied with worldly vicissitudes; the latter is spiritual, of calm tenour; marked to himself only by his growth in inward clearness, to the world only by the

peaceable fruits of this. It is to the first of these periods that we shall here chiefly direct ourselves.

In his parentage, and the circumstances of his earlier years, we may reckon him fortunate. His parents, indeed, are not rich, nor even otherwise independent: yet neither are they meanly poor; and warm affection, a true honest character, ripened in both into religion, not without an openness for knowledge, and even considerable intellectual culture, makes amends for every defect. The Boy, too, is himself of a character in which, to the observant, lies the richest promise. A modest, still nature, apt for all instruction in heart or head; flashes of liveliness, of impetuosity, from time to time breaking through. That little anecdote of the Thunder-storm is so graceful in its littleness, that one cannot but hope it may be authentic:

'Once, it is said, during a tremendous thunder-storm, his father missed him in the young group within doors; none of the sisters could tell what was become of Fritz, and the old man grew at length so anxious that he was forced to go out in quest of him. Fritz was scarcely past the age of infancy, and knew not the dangers of a scene so awful. His father found him at last, in a solitary place of the neighbourhood, perched on the branch of a tree, gazing at the tempestuous face of the sky, and watching the flashes as in succession they spread their lurid gleam over it. To the reprimands of his parent, the whimpering truant pleaded in extenuation, "that the Lightning was so beautiful, and he wished to see where it was coming from!"'

In his village-school he reads the Classics with diligence, without relish; at home, with far deeper feelings, the Bible; and already his young heart is caught with that mystic grandeur of the Hebrew Prophets. His devout nature, moulded by the pious habits of his parents, inclines him to be a clergyman: a clergyman, indeed, he proved; only the Church he ministered in was the Catholic, a far more Catholic than that false Romish one. But already in his ninth year, not without rapturous amazement, and a lasting remembrance, he had seen the 'splendours of the Ludwigsburg Theatre';

and, so unconsciously, cast a glimpse into that world, where, by accident or natural preference, his own genius was one day to work out its noblest triumphs.

Before the end of his boyhood, however, begins a far harsher era for Schiller; wherein, under quite other nurture, other faculties were to be developed in him. He must enter on a scene of oppression, distortion, isolation; under which, for the present, the fairest years of his existence are painfully crushed down. But this too has its wholesome influences on him; for there is in genius that alchemy which converts all metals into gold; which from suffering educes strength, from error clearer wisdom, from all things good.

'The Duke of Würtemberg had lately founded a free seminary for certain branches of professional education: it was first set up at Solitude, one of his country residences; and had now been transferred to Stuttgard, where, under an improved form, and with the name of *Karlsschule*, we believe it still exists. The Duke proposed to give the sons of his military officers a preferable claim to the benefits of this institution; and having formed a good opinion both of Schiller and his father, he invited the former to profit by this opportunity. The offer occasioned great embarrassment: the young man and his parents were alike determined in favour of the Church, a project with which this new one was inconsistent. Their embarrassment was but increased when the Duke, on learning the nature of their scruples, desired them to think well before they decided. It was out of fear, and with reluctance, that his proposal was accepted. Schiller enrolled himself in 1773; and turned, with a heavy heart, from freedom and cherished hopes, to Greek, and seclusion, and Law.

'His anticipations proved to be but too just: the six years which he spent in this Establishment were the most harassing and comfortless of his life. The Stuttgard system of education seems to have been formed on the principle, not of cherishing and correcting nature, but of rooting it out, and supplying its place by something better. The process of teaching and living was conducted with the stiff formality of military drilling; everything went on by statute and ordinance; there was no scope for the exercise of free-will, no allowance for the varieties of original structure. A scholar might possess what instincts or capacities he pleased; the "regulations of the school" took no account of this; he must fit himself into the common mould, which, like the old Giant's bed, stood there, appointed by superior authority, to be filled alike by

the great and the little. The same strict and narrow course of reading and composition was marked out for each beforehand, and it was by stealth if he read or wrote anything beside. Their domestic economy was regulated in the same spirit as their preceptorial: it consisted of the same sedulous exclusion of all that could border on pleasure, or give any exercise to choice. The pupils were kept apart from the conversation or sight of any person but their teachers; none ever got beyond the precincts of despotism to snatch even a fearful joy; their very amusements proceeded by the word of command.

'How grievous all this must have been it is easy to conceive. To Schiller it was more grievous than to any other. Of an ardent and impetuous yet delicate nature, whilst his discontentment devoured him internally, he was too modest to give it the relief of utterance by deeds or words. Locked up within himself, he suffered deeply, but without complaining. Some of his Letters written during this period have been preserved: they exhibit the ineffectual struggles of a fervid and busy mind veiling its many chagrins under a certain dreary patience, which only shows them more painfully. He pored over his lexicons, and grammars, and insipid tasks, with an artificial composure; but his spirit pined within him like a captive's when he looked forth into the cheerful world, or recollected the affection of parents, the hopes and frolicsome enjoyments of past years.'

Youth is to all the glad season of life; but often only by what it hopes, not by what it attains, or what it escapes. In these sufferings of Schiller's many a one may say, there is nothing unexampled: could not the history of every Eton Scholar, of every poor Midshipman, with his rudely-broken domestic ties, his privations, persecutions and cheerless solitude of heart, equal or outdo them? In respect of these its palpable hardships perhaps it might; and be still very miserable. But the hardship which presses heaviest on Schiller lies deeper than all these; out of which the natural fire of almost any young heart will, sooner or later, rise victorious. His worst oppression is an oppression of the moral sense; a fettering not of the Desires only, but of the pure reasonable Will: for besides all outward sufferings, his mind is driven from its true aim, dimly yet invincibly felt to be the true one; and turned, by sheer violence, into one which it feels to be false. Not in Law, with its profits and dignities; not

in Medicine, which he willingly, yet still hopelessly exchanges for Law; not in the routine of any marketable occupation, how gainful or honoured soever, can his soul find content and a home: only in some far purer and higher region of Activity; for which he has yet no name; which he once fancied to be the Church, which at length he discovers to be Poetry. Nor is this any transient boyish wilfulness, but a deep-seated, earnest, ineradicable longing, the dim purpose of his whole inner man. Nevertheless as a transient boyish wilfulness his teachers must regard it, and deal with it; and not till after the fiercest contest, and a clear victory, will its true nature be recognised. Herein lay the sharpest sting of Schiller's ill-fortune; his whole mind is wrenched asunder; he has no rallying point in his misery; he is suffering and toiling for a wrong object. 'A singular miscalculation of Nature,' he says, long afterwards, 'had combined my poetical tendencies with the place of my birth. Any disposition to Poetry did violence to the laws of the Institution where I was educated, and contradicted the plan of its founder. For eight years my enthusiasm struggled with military discipline; but the passion for Poetry is vehement and fiery as a first love. What discipline was meant to extinguish, it blew into a flame. To escape from arrangements that tortured me, my heart sought refuge in the world of ideas, when as yet I was unacquainted with the world of realities, from which iron bars excluded me.'

Doubtless Schiller's own prudence had already taught him that in order to live poetically, it was first requisite to live; that he should and must, as himself expresses it, 'forsake the balmy climate of Pindus for the Greenland of a barren and dreary science of terms.' But the dull work of this Greenland once accomplished, he might rationally hope that his task was done; that the 'leisure gained by superior diligence' would be his own, for Poetry, or whatever else he pleased. Truly, it was 'intolerable and degrading to be hemmed-in still farther by the caprices of severe and formal pedagogues.' No wonder

that Schiller 'brooded gloomily' over his situation. But what was to be done? 'Many plans he formed for deliverance: sometimes he would escape in secret to catch a glimpse of the free and busy world, to him forbidden: sometimes he laid schemes for utterly abandoning a place which he abhorred, and trusting to fortune for the rest.' But he is young, inexperienced, unprovided; without help or counsel: there is nothing to be done but endure.

'Under such corroding and continual vexations,' says his Biographer, 'an ordinary spirit would have sunk at length; would have gradually given up its loftier aspirations, and sought refuge in vicious indulgence, or at best have sullenly harnessed itself into the yoke, and plodded through existence; weary, discontented and broken, ever casting back a hankering look on the dreams of his youth, and ever without power to realise them. But Schiller was no ordinary character, and did not act like one. Beneath a cold and simple exterior, dignified with no artificial attractions, and marred in its native amiableness by the incessant obstruction, the isolation and painful destitutions under which he lived, there was concealed a burning energy of soul, which no obstruction could extinguish. The hard circumstances of his fortune had prevented the natural development of his mind; his faculties had been cramped and misdirected; but they had gathered strength by opposition and the habit of self-dependence which it encouraged. His thoughts, unguided by a teacher, had sounded into the depths of his own nature and the mysteries of his own fate; his feelings and passions, unshared by any other heart, had been driven back upon his own; where, like the volcanic fire that smoulders and fuses in secret, they accumulated till their force grew irresistible.

'Hitherto Schiller had passed for an unprofitable, a discontented and a disobedient Boy: but the time was now come when the gyves of school-discipline could no longer cripple and distort the giant might of his nature: he stood forth as a Man, and wrenched asunder his fetters with a force that was felt at the extremities of Europe. The publication of the *Robbers* forms an era not only in Schiller's history, but in the literature of the World; and there seems no doubt that, but for so mean a cause as the perverted discipline of the Stuttgard school, we had never seen this tragedy. Schiller commenced it in his nineteenth year; and the circumstances under which it was composed are to be traced in all its parts.

'Translations of the work soon appeared in almost all the languages

of Europe,[1] and were read in almost all of them with a deep interest, compounded of admiration and aversion, according to the relative proportions of sensibility and judgment in the various minds which contemplated the subject. In Germany, the enthusiasm which the *Robbers* excited was extreme. The young author had burst upon the world like a meteor; and surprise, for a time, suspended the power of cool and rational criticism. In the ferment produced by the universal discussion of this single topic, the poet was magnified above his natural dimensions, great as they were: and though the general sentence was loudly in his favour, yet he found detractors as well as praisers, and both equally beyond the limits of moderation.

'But the tragedy of the *Robbers* produced for its Author some consequences of a kind much more sensible than these. We have called it the signal of Schiller's deliverance from school-tyranny and military constraint; but its operation in this respect was not immediate. At first it seemed to involve him more deeply than before. He had finished the original sketch of it in 1778; but for fear of offence, he kept it secret till his medical studies were completed. These, in the meantime, he had pursued with sufficient assiduity to merit the usual honours. In 1780, he had, in consequence, obtained the post of Surgeon to the regiment *Augé* in the Würtemberg army. This advancement enabled him to complete his project,—to print the *Robbers* at his own expense; not being able to find any bookseller that would undertake it. The nature of the work, and the universal interest it awakened, drew attention to the private circumstances of the Author, whom the *Robbers*, as well as other pieces of his writing that had found their way into the periodical publications of the time, sufficiently showed to be no common man. Many grave persons were offended at the vehement sentiments expressed in the *Robbers*; and the unquestioned ability with which these extravagances were expressed but made the matter worse. To Schiller's superiors, above all, such things were inconceivable; he might perhaps be a very great genius, but was certainly a dangerous servant for His Highness, the Grand Duke of Würtemberg. Officious people mingled themselves in the affair: nay, the graziers of the Alps were brought to bear upon it. The Grisons magistrates, it appeared, had seen the book, and were mortally huffed at their people's being there spoken of, according to a Swabian adage, as *common highwaymen*.[2] They complained in

[1] Our English translation, one of the washiest, was executed (we have been told) in Edinburgh by a 'Lord of Session,' otherwise not unknown in Literature; who went to work under deepest concealment, lest evil might befall him. The confidential Devil, now an Angel, who mysteriously carried him the proof-sheets, is our informant.

[2] The obnoxious passage has been carefully expunged from subsequent edi-

the *Hamburg Correspondent*; and a sort of jackal at Ludwigsburg, one Walter, whose name deserves to be thus kept in mind, volunteered to plead their cause before the Grand Duke.

'Informed of all these circumstances, the Grand Duke expressed his disapprobation of Schiller's poetical labours in the most unequivocal terms. Schiller was at length summoned before him; and it then turned out, that His Highness was not only dissatisfied with the moral or political errors of the work, but scandalised moreover at its want of literary merit. In this latter respect he was kind enough to proffer his own services. But Schiller seems to have received the proposal with no sufficient gratitude; and the interview passed without advantage to either party. It terminated in the Duke's commanding Schiller to abide by medical subjects: or at least, to beware of writing any more poetry, without submitting it to *his* inspection.

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'Various new mortifications awaited Schiller. It was in vain that he discharged the humble duties of his station with the most strict fidelity, and even, it is said, with superior skill: he was a suspected person, and his most innocent actions were misconstrued, his slightest faults were visited with the full measure of official severity. * * *

'His free spirit shrank at the prospect of wasting its strength in strife against the pitiful constraints, the minute and endless persecutions of men who knew him not, yet had his fortune in their hands: the idea of dungeons and jailors haunted and tortured his mind; and the means of escaping them, the renunciation of poetry, the source of all his joy, if likewise of many woes, the radiant guiding-star of his turbid and obscure existence, seemed a sentence of death to all that was dignified, and delightful, and worth retaining in his character. * * *

'With the natural feeling of a young author, he had ventured to go in secret, and witness the first representation of his Tragedy at Mannheim. His incognito did not conceal him; he was put under arrest, during a week, for this offence: and as the punishment did not deter him from again transgressing in a similar manner, he learned that it was in contemplation to try more rigorous measures with him. Dark hints were given to him of some exemplary as well as imminent severity:

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tions. It was in the third Scene of the second Act. Spiegelberg, discoursing with Razmann, observes, "An honest man you may form of windle-straws; but to make a rascal you must have grist: besides, there is a national genius in it, —a certain rascal-climate, so to speak." In the first Edition there was added, "*Go to the Grisons, for instance; that is what I call the Thief's Athens.*" The patriot who stood forth, on this occasion, for the honour of the Grisons, to deny this weighty charge and denounce the crime of making it, was not Dogberry or Verges, but 'one of the noble family of Salis.'

and Dalberg's aid, the sole hope of averting it by quiet means, was distant and dubious. Schiller saw himself reduced to extremities. Beleaguered with present distresses, and the most horrible forebodings, on every side; roused to the highest pitch of indignation, yet forced to keep silence and wear the face of patience, he could endure this maddening constraint no longer. He resolved to be free, at whatever risk; to abandon advantages which he could not buy at such a price; to quit his step-dame home, and go forth, though friendless and alone, to seek his fortune in the great market of life. Some foreign Duke or Prince was arriving at Stuttgard; and all the people were in movement, witnessing the spectacle of his entrance: Schiller seized this opportunity of retiring from the city, careless whither he went, so he got beyond the reach of turnkeys, and Grand Dukes, and commanding officers. It was in the month of October 1782, his twenty-third year.'[1]

Such were the circumstances under which Schiller rose to manhood. We see them permanently influence his character; but there is also a strength in himself which on the whole triumphs over them. The kindly and the unkindly alike lead him towards the goal. In childhood, the most unheeded, but by far the most important era of existence,—as it were, the still Creation-days of the whole future man,—he had breathed the only wholesome atmosphere, a soft atmosphere of affection and joy: the invisible seeds which are one day to ripen into clear Devoutness, and all humane Virtue, are happily sown in him. Not till he has gathered force for resistance, does the time of contradiction, of being 'purified by suffering,' arrive. For this contradiction too we have to thank those Stuttgard Schoolmasters and their purblind Duke. Had the system they followed been a milder, more reasonable one, we should not indeed have altogether lost our Poet, for the Poetry lay in his inmost soul, and could not remain unuttered; but we might well have found him under a far inferior character: not dependent on himself and truth, but dependent on the world and its gifts; not standing on a native, everlasting basis, but on an accidental, transient one.

In Schiller himself, as manifested in these emergencies, we already trace the chief features which distinguish him through

[1] *Life of Schiller*, Part I.

life. A tenderness, a sensitive delicacy, aggravated under that harsh treatment, issues in a certain shyness and reserve: which, as conjoined moreover with habits of internal and not of external activity, might in time have worked itself, had his natural temper been less warm and affectionate, into timorous self-seclusion, dissociality and even positive misanthropy. Nay, generally viewed, there is much in Schiller at this epoch that to a careless observer might have passed for weakness; as indeed, for such observers, weakness and fineness of nature are easily confounded. One element of strength, however, and the root of all strength, he throughout evinces: he wills one thing and knows what he wills. His mind has a purpose, and still better, a right purpose. He already loves true spiritual Beauty with his whole heart and his whole soul; and for the attainment, for the pursuit of this, is prepared to make all sacrifices. As a dim instinct, under vague forms, this aim first appears; gains force with his force, clearness in the opposition it must conquer; and at length declares itself, with a peremptory emphasis which will admit of no contradiction.

As a mere piece of literary history, these passages of Schiller's life are not without interest: this is a 'persecution for conscience-sake,' such as has oftener befallen heresy in Religion than heresy in Literature; a blind struggle to extinguish, by physical violence, the inward celestial light of a human soul; and here in regard to Literature, as in regard to Religion it always is, an ineffectual struggle. Doubtless, as religious Inquisitors have often done, those secular Inquisitors meant honestly in persecuting; and since the matter went well in spite of them, their interference with it may be forgiven and forgotten. We have dwelt the longer on these proceedings of theirs, because they bring us to the grand crisis of Schiller's history, and for the first time show us his will decisively asserting itself, decisively pronouncing the law whereby his whole future life is to be governed. He himself says, he 'went empty away; empty in purse and hope.' Yet the mind that dwelt in him was still there with its gifts; and the task of

his existence now lay undivided before him. He is henceforth a Literary Man; and need appear in no other character. 'All my connexions,' he could ere long say, 'are now dissolved. The public is now all to me; my study, my sovereign, my confidant. To the public alone I from this time belong; before this and no other tribunal will I place myself; this alone do I reverence and fear. Something majestic hovers before me, as I determine now to wear no other fetters but the sentence of the world, to appeal to no other throne but the soul of man.'[1]

In his subsequent life, with all varieties of outward fortune, we find a noble inward unity. That love of Literature, and that resolution to abide by it at all hazards, do not forsake him. He wanders through the world; looks at it under many phases; mingles in the joys of social life; is a husband, father; experiences all the common destinies of man; but the same 'radiant guiding-star' which, often obscured, had led him safe through the perplexities of his youth, now shines on him with unwavering light. In all relations and conditions Schiller is blameless, amiable; he is even little tempted to err. That high purpose after spiritual perfection, which with him was a love of Poetry, and an unwearied active love, is itself, when pure and supreme, the necessary parent of good conduct, as of noble feeling. With all men it should be pure and supreme, for in one or the other shape it is the true end of man's life. Neither in any man is it ever wholly obliterated; with the most, however, it remains a passive sentiment, an idle wish. And even with the small residue of men, in whom it attains some measure of activity, who would be Poets in act or word, how seldom is it the sincere and highest purpose, how seldom unmixed with vulgar ambition, and low, mere earthly aims, which distort or utterly pervert its manifestations! With Schiller, again, it was the one thing needful; the first duty, for which all other duties worked together, under which all other duties quietly prospered, as under their

[1] Preface to the *Thalia*.

rightful sovereign. Worldly preferment, fame itself, he did not covet: yet of fame he reaps the most plenteous harvest; and of worldly goods what little he wanted is in the end made sure to him. His mild, honest character everywhere gains him friends: that upright, peaceful, simple life is honourable in the eyes of all; and they who know him the best love him the most.

Perhaps among all the circumstances of Schiller's literary life, there was none so important for him as his connexion with Goethe. To use our old figure, we might say, that if Schiller was a Priest, then was Goethe the Bishop from whom he first acquired clear spiritual light, by whose hands he was ordained to the priesthood. Their friendship has been much celebrated, and deserved to be so: it is a pure relation; unhappily too rare in Literature; where if a Swift and Pope can even found an imperious Duumvirate, on little more than mutually-tolerated pride, and part the spoils for some time without quarrelling, it is thought a credit. Seldom do men combine so steadily and warmly for such purposes, which when weighed in the economic balance are but gossamer. It appears also that preliminary difficulties stood in the way; prepossessions of some strength had to be conquered on both sides. For a number of years, the two, by accident or choice, never met, and their first interview scarcely promised any permanent approximation. 'On the whole,' says Schiller, 'this personal meeting has not at all diminished the idea, great as it was, which I had previously formed of Goethe; but I doubt whether we shall ever come into close communication with each other. Much that still interests me has already had its epoch with him. His whole nature is, from its very origin, otherwise constructed than mine; his world is not my world; our modes of conceiving things appear to be essentially different. From such a combination no secure substantial intimacy can result.'

Nevertheless, in spite of far graver prejudices on the part of Goethe,—to say nothing of the poor jealousies which in

another man so circumstanced would openly or secretly have been at work,—a secure substantial intimacy did result; manifesting itself by continual good offices, and interrupted only by death. If we regard the relative situation of the parties, and their conduct in this matter, we must recognise in both of them no little social virtue; at all events, a deep disinterested love of worth. In the case of Goethe, more especially, who, as the elder and everyway greater of the two, has little to expect in comparison with what he gives, this friendly union, had we space to explain its nature and progress, would give new proof that, as poor Jung Stilling also experienced, 'the man's heart, which few know, is as true and noble as his genius, which all know.'

By Goethe, and this even before the date of their friendship, Schiller's outward interests had been essentially promoted: he was introduced, under that sanction, into the service of Weimar, to an academic office, to a pension; his whole way was made smooth for him. In spiritual matters, this help, or rather let us say coöperation, for it came not in the shape of help, but of reciprocal service, was of still more lasting consequence. By the side of his friend, Schiller rises into the highest regions of Art he ever reached; and in all worthy things is sure of sympathy, of one wise judgment amid a crowd of unwise ones, of one helpful hand amid many hostile. Thus outwardly and inwardly assisted and confirmed, he henceforth goes on his way with new steadfastness, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; and while days are given him, devotes them wholly to his best duty. It is rare that one man can do so much for another, can permanently benefit another; so mournfully, in giving and receiving, as in most charitable affections and finer movements of our nature, are we all held-in by that paltry vanity which, under reputable names, usurps, on both sides, a sovereignty it has no claim to. Nay, many times, when our friend would honestly help us, and strives to do it, yet will he never bring himself to understand what we really need, and so to forward us on

our own path; but insists more simply on our taking his path, and leaves us as incorrigible because we will not and cannot. Thus men are solitary among each other; no one will help his neighbour; each has even to assume a defensive attitude lest his neighbour hinder him!

Of Schiller's zealous, entire devotedness to Literature we have already spoken as of his crowning virtue, and the great source of his welfare. With what ardour he pursued this object, his whole life, from the earliest stage of it, had given proof: but the clearest proof, clearer even than that youthful self-exile, was reserved for his later years, when a lingering, incurable disease had laid on him its new and ever-galling burden. At no period of Schiller's history does the native nobleness of his character appear so decidedly as now in this season of silent unwitnessed heroism, when the dark enemy dwelt within himself, unconquerable, yet ever, in all other struggles, to be kept at bay. We have medical evidence that during the last fifteen years of his life, not a moment could have been free of pain. Yet he utters no complaint. In this 'Correspondence with Goethe' we see him cheerful, laborious; scarcely speaking of his maladies, and then only historically, in the style of a third party, as it were, calculating what force and length of days might still remain at his disposal. Nay, his highest poetical performances, we may say all that are truly poetical, belong to this era. If we recollect how many poor valetudinarians, Rousseaus, Cowpers and the like, men otherwise of fine endowments, dwindle under the influence of nervous disease into pining wretchedness, some into madness itself; and then that Schiller, under the like influence, wrote some of his deepest speculations, and all his genuine dramas, from *Wallenstein* to *Wilhelm Tell*, we shall the better estimate his merit.

It has been said, that only in Religion, or something equivalent to Religion, can human nature support itself under such trials. But Schiller too had his Religion; was a Worshipper, nay, as we have often said, a Priest; and so in

his earthly sufferings wanted not a heavenly stay. Without some such stay his life might well have been intolerable; stript of the Ideal, what remained for him in the Real was but a poor matter. Do we talk of his 'happiness'? Alas, what is the loftiest flight of genius, the finest frenzy that ever for moments united Heaven with Earth, to the perennial never-failing joys of a digestive-apparatus thoroughly eupeptic? Has not the turtle-eating man an eternal sunshine of the breast? Does not his Soul,—which, as in some Sclavonic dialects, means his Stomach,—sit forever at its ease, enwrapped in warm condiments, amid spicy odours; enjoying the past, the present and the future; and only awakening from its soft trance to the sober certainty of a still higher bliss each meal-time,—three, or even four visions of Heaven in the space of one solar day! While for the sick man of genius, 'whose world is of the mind, ideal, internal; when the mildew of lingering disease has struck that world, and begun to blacken and consume its beauty, what remains but despondency, and bitterness, and desolate sorrow felt and anticipated to the end?'

'Woe to him,' continues this Jeremiah, 'if his will likewise falter, if his resolution fail, and his spirit bend its neck to the yoke of this new enemy! Idleness and a disturbed imagination will gain the mastery of him, and let loose their thousand fiends to harass him, to torment him into madness. Alas, the bondage of Algiers is freedom compared with this of the sick man of genius, whose heart has fainted, and sunk beneath its load. His clay dwelling is changed into a gloomy prison; every nerve has become an avenue of disgust or anguish, and the soul sits within in her melancholy loneliness, a prey to the spectres of despair, or stupefied with excess of suffering; doomed as it were to a life-in-death, to a consciousness of agonised existence, without the consciousness of power which should accompany it. Happily death, or entire fatuity at length puts an end to such scenes of ignoble misery, which, however, ignoble as they are, we ought to view with pity rather than contempt.'[1]

Yet on the whole, we say, it is a shame for the man of

[1] *Life of Schiller* (Cent. Ed.), p. 107.

genius to complain. Has he not a 'light from Heaven within him, to which the splendour of all earthly thrones and principalities is but darkness? And the head that wears such a crown grudges to lie uneasy? If that same 'light from Heaven,' shining through the falsest media, supported Syrian Simon through all weather on his sixty-feet Pillar, or the still more wonderful Eremite who walled himself, for life, up to the chin, in stone and mortar; how much more should it do, when shining direct, and pure from all intermixture? Let the modern Priest of Wisdom either suffer his small persecutions and inflictions, though sickness be of the number, in patience, or admit that ancient fanatics and bedlamites were truer worshippers than he.

A foolish controversy on this subject of Happiness, now and then occupies some intellectual dinner-party; speculative gentlemen we have seen more than once almost forget their wine in arguing whether Happiness was the chief end of man. The most cry out, with Pope: 'Happiness, our being's end and aim'; and ask whether it is even conceivable that we should follow any other. How comes it, then, cry the Opposition, that the gross are happier than the refined; that even though we know them to be happier, we would not change places with them? Is it not written, Increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow? And yet also written, in characters still more ineffaceable, Pursue knowledge, attain clear vision, as the beginning of all good? Were your doctrine right, for what should we struggle with our whole might, for what pray to Heaven, if not that the 'malady of thought' might be utterly stifled within us, and a power of digestion and secretion, to which that of the tiger were trifling, be imparted instead thereof? Whereupon the others deny that thought is a malady; that increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow; that Aldermen have a sunnier life than Aristotle's, though the Stagyrite himself died exclaiming, *Fœde mundum intravi, anxius vixi, perturbatus morior;* etc. etc.: and thus the argument circulates, and the bottles stand still.

So far as that Happiness-question concerns the symposia of speculative gentlemen,—the rather as it really is a good enduring hacklog whereon to chop logic, for those so minded, —we with great willingness leave it resting on its own bottom. But there are earnest natures for whom Truth is no plaything, but the staff of life; men whom the 'solid reality of things' will not carry forward; who, when the 'inward voice' is silent in them, are powerless, nor will the loud huzzaing of millions supply the want of it. To these men, seeking anxiously for guidance; feeling that did they once clearly see the right, they would follow it cheerfully to weal or to woe, comparatively careless which; to these men the question, what is the proper aim of man, has a deep and awful interest.

For the sake of such, it may be remarked that the origin of this argument, like that of every other argument under the sun, lies in the confusion of language. If Happiness mean Welfare, there is no doubt but all men should and must pursue their Welfare, that is to say, pursue what is worthy of their pursuit. But if, on the other hand, Happiness mean, as for most men it does, 'agreeable sensations,' Enjoyment refined or not, then must we observe that there *is* a doubt; or rather that there is a certainty the other way. Strictly considered, this truth, that man has in him something higher than a Love of Pleasure, take Pleasure in what sense you will, has been the text of all true Teachers and Preachers, since the beginning of the world; and in one or another dialect, we may hope, will continue to be preached and taught till the world end. Neither is our own day without its assertors thereof: what, for example, does the astonished reader make of this little sentence from Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters*? It is on that old question, the 'improvement of the species'; which, however, is handled here in a very new manner:

'The first acquisitions, then, which men gathered in the Kingdom of Spirit were *Anxiety* and *Fear*; both, it is true, products of Reason, not of Sense; but of a Reason that mistook its object, and mistook its mode

of application. Fruits of this same tree are all your Happiness-Systems (*Glückseligkeitssysteme*), whether they have for object the passing day or the whole of life, or what renders them no whit more venerable, the whole of Eternity. A boundless duration of Being and Well-being (*Daseyns und Wohlseyns*) simply for Being and Well-being's sake, is an Ideal belonging to Appetite alone, and which only the struggle of mere Animalism (*Thierheit*) longing to be infinite, gives rise to. Thus without gaining anything for his Manhood, he, by this first effort of Reason, loses the happy limitation of the Animal; and has now only the unenviable superiority of missing the Present in an effort directed to the Distance, and whereby still, in the whole boundless Distance, nothing but the Present is sought for.'[1]

The *Æsthetic Letters*, in which this and many far deeper matters come into view, will one day deserve a long chapter to themselves. Meanwhile we cannot but remark, as a curious symptom of this time, that the pursuit of merely sensuous good, of personal Pleasure, in one shape or other, should be the universally admitted formula of man's whole duty. Once, Epicurus had his Zeno; and if the herd of mankind have at all times been the slaves of Desire, drudging anxiously for their mess of pottage, or filling themselves with swine's husks, —earnest natures were not wanting who, at least in theory, asserted for their kind a higher vocation than this; declaring, as they could, that man's soul was no dead Balance for 'motives' to sway hither and thither, but a living, divine Soul, indefeasibly free, whose birthright it was to be the servant of Virtue, Goodness, God, and in such service to be blessed without fee or reward. Nowadays, however, matters are, on all hands, managed far more prudently. The choice of Hercules could not occasion much difficulty, in these times, to any young man of talent. On the one hand,—by a path which is steep, indeed, yet smoothed by much travelling, and kept in constant repair by many a moral Macadam,—smokes (in patent calefactors) a Dinner of innumerable courses; on the other, by a downward path, through avenues of very mixed character, frowns in the distance, a grim Gallows,

[1] *Briefe über die æsthetische Erziehung des Menschen*, b. 24.

probably with 'improved drop.' Thus is Utility the only God of these days; and our honest Benthamites are but a small Provincial Synod of that boundless Communion. Without gift of prophecy we may predict, that the straggling bush-fire which is kept up here and there against that body of well-intentioned men, must one day become a universal battle; and the grand question, Mind *versus* Matter, be again under new forms judged of and decided.—But we wander too far from our task; to which, therefore, nothing doubtful of a prosperous issue in due time to that Utilitarian struggle, we hasten to return.

In forming for ourselves some picture of Schiller as a man, of what may be called his moral character, perhaps the very perfection of his manner of existence tends to diminish our estimate of its merits. What he aimed at he has attained in a singular degree. His life, at least from the period of manhood, is still, unruffled; of clear, even course. The completeness of the victory hides from us the magnitude of the struggle. On the whole, however, we may admit, that his character was not so much a great character as a holy one. We have often named him a Priest; and this title, with the quiet loftiness, the pure, secluded, only internal, yet still heavenly worth that should belong to it, perhaps best describes him. One high enthusiasm takes possession of his whole nature. Herein lies his strength, as well as the task he has to do; for this he lived, and we may say also he died for it. In his life we see not that the social affections played any deep part. As a son, husband, father, friend, he is ever kindly, honest, amiable; but rarely, if at all, do outward things stimulate him into what can be called passion. Of the wild loves and lamentations, and all the fierce ardour that distinguished, for instance his Scottish contemporary Burns, there is scarcely any trace here. In fact, it was towards the Ideal, not towards the Actual, that Schiller's faith and hope was directed. His highest happiness lay not in outward honour, pleasure, social recreation, perhaps not even in

friendly affection, such as the world could show it; but in the realm of Poetry, a city of the mind, where, for him, all that was true and noble had foundation. His habits, accordingly, though far from dissocial, were solitary; his chief business and chief pleasure lay in silent meditation.

'His intolerance of interruptions,' we are told, at an early period of his life, 'first put him on the plan of studying by night; an alluring, but pernicious practice, which began at Dresden, and was never afterwards given up. His recreations breathed a similar spirit: he loved to be much alone, and strongly moved. The banks of the Elbe were the favourite resort of his mornings: here, wandering in solitude, amid groves and lawns, and green and beautiful places, he abandoned his mind to delicious musings; or meditated on the cares and studies which had lately been employing, and were again soon to employ him. At times he might be seen floating on the river, in a gondola, feasting himself with the loveliness of earth and sky. He delighted most to be there when tempests were abroad; his unquiet spirit found a solace in the expression of its own unrest on the face of Nature; danger lent a charm to his situation; he felt in harmony with the scene, when the rack was sweeping stormfully across the heavens, and the forests were sounding in the breeze, and the river was rolling its chafed waters into wild eddying heaps.'

'During summer,' it is mentioned at a subsequent date, 'his place of study was in a garden, which he at length purchased, in the suburbs of Jena, not far from the Weselhofts' house, where, at that time, was the office of the *Allgemeine Litteraturzeitung*. Reckoning from the market-place of Jena, it lies on the south-west border of the town between the Engelgatter and the Neuthor, in a hollow defile, through which a part of the Leutrabach flows round the city. On the top of the acclivity, from which there is a beautiful prospect into the valley of the Saale, and the fir mountains of the neighbouring forest, Schiller built himself a small house, with a single chamber. It was his favourite abode during hours of composition; a great part of the works he then wrote were written here. In winter he likewise dwelt apart from the tumult of men;—in the Griesbachs' house, on the outside of the city trench. On sitting down to his desk at night, he was wont to keep some strong coffee, or wine-chocolate, but more frequently a flask of old Rhenish or Champagne, standing by him, that he might from time to time repair the exhaustion of nature. Often the neighbours used to hear him earnestly declaiming in the silence of the night; and whoever had an opportunity of watching him on such occasions,—a thing very easy to be done, from the heights lying opposite his little garden-house, on the other side of the dale,—

might see him now speaking aloud, and walking swiftly to and fro in his chamber, then suddenly throwing himself down into his chair, and writing; and drinking the while, sometimes more than once, from the glass standing near him. In winter he was to be found at his desk till four, or even five o'clock, in the morning; in summer till towards three. He then went to bed, from which he seldom rose till nine or ten.'

And again:

'At Weimar his present way of life was like his former one at Jena: his business was to study and compose; his recreations were in the circle of his family, where he could abandon himself to affections grave or trifling, and in frank cheerful intercourse with a few friends. Of the latter he had lately formed a social club, the meetings of which afforded him a regular and innocent amusement. He still loved solitary walks: in the Park at Weimar he might frequently be seen, wandering among the groves and remote avenues, with a note-book in his hand; now loitering slowly along, now standing still, now moving rapidly on: if any one appeared in sight, he would dart into another alley, that his dream might not be broken. One of his favourite resorts, we are told, was the thickly-overshadowed rocky path which leads to the *Römische Haus*, a pleasure-house of the Duke's, built under the direction of Goethe. There he would often sit in the gloom of the crags overgrown with cypresses and boxwood; shady thickets before him; not far from the murmur of a little brook, which there gushes in a smooth slaty channel, and where some verses of Goethe are cut upon a brown plate of stone and fixed in the rock.'[1]

Such retirement alike from the tumults and the pleasures of busy men, though it seems to diminish the merit of virtuous conduct in Schiller, is itself, as hinted above, the best proof of his virtue. No man is born without ambitious worldly desires; and for no man, especially for no man like Schiller, can the victory over them be too complete. His duty lay in that mode of life; and he had both discovered his duty, and addressed himself with his whole might to perform it. Nor was it in estrangement from men's interests that this seclusion originated; but rather in deeper concern for these. From many indications, we can perceive that to Schiller the task of the Poet appeared of far weightier

[1] *Life of Schiller.*

import to mankind, in these times, than that of any other man whatever. It seemed to him that he was 'casting his bread upon the waters, and would find it after many days'; that when the noise of all conquerors, and demagogues, and political reformers had quite died away, some tone of heavenly wisdom that had dwelt even in him might still linger among men, and be acknowledged as heavenly and priceless, whether as his or not; whereby, though dead, he would yet speak, and his spirit would live throughout all generations, when the syllables that once formed his name had passed into forgetfulness forever. We are told, 'he was in the highest degree philanthropic and humane: and often said that he had no deeper wish than to know all men happy.' What was still more, he strove, in his public and private capacity, to do his utmost for that end. Honest, merciful, disinterested he is at all times found: and for the great duty laid on him no man was ever more unweariedly ardent. It was his evening song and his morning prayer. He lived for it; and he died for it; 'sacrificing,' in the words of Goethe, 'his Life itself to this Delineating of Life.'

In collision with his fellow-men, for with him as with others this also was a part of his relation to society, we find him no less noble than in friendly union with them. He mingles in none of the controversies of the time; or only like a god in the battles of men. In his conduct towards inferiors, even ill-intentioned and mean inferiors, there is everywhere a true, dignified, patrician spirit. Ever witnessing, and inwardly lamenting, the baseness of vulgar Literature in his day, he makes no clamorous attacks on it; alludes to it only from afar: as in Milton's writings, so in his, few of his contemporaries are named, or hinted at; it was not with men, but with things that he had a warfare. The *Review of Bürger*, so often descanted on, was doubtless highly afflicting to that down-broken, unhappy poet; but no hostility to Bürger, only love and veneration for the Art he professed, is to be discerned in it. With Bürger, or with

any other mortal, he had no quarrel: the favour of the public, which he himself enjoyed in the highest measure, he esteemed at no high value. 'The Artist,' said he in a noble passage, already known to English readers, 'the Artist, it is true, is the son of his time; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favourite! Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time; that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but dreadful like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it!' On the whole, Schiller has no trace of vanity; scarcely of pride, even in its best sense, for the modest self-consciousness, which characterises genius, is with him rather implied than openly expressed. He has no hatred; no anger, save against Falsehood and Baseness, where it may be called a holy anger. Presumptuous triviality stood bared in his keen glance; but his look is the noble scowl that curls the lip of an Apollo, when, pierced with sun-arrows, the serpent expires before him. In a word, we can say of Schiller, what can be said only of few in any country or time: He was a high ministering servant at Truth's altar; and bore him worthily of the office he held. Let this, and that it was even in our age, be forever remembered to his praise.

Schiller's intellectual character has, as indeed is always the case, an accurate conformity with his moral one. Here too he is simple in his excellence; lofty rather than expansive or varied; pure, divinely ardent rather than great. A noble sensibility, the truest sympathy with Nature, in all forms, animates him; yet scarcely any creative gift altogether commensurate with this. If to his mind's eye all forms of Nature have a meaning and beauty, it is only under a few forms, chiefly of the severe or pathetic kind, that he can body forth this meaning, can represent as a Poet what as a Thinker he discerns and loves. We might say, his music

is true spheral music; yet only with few tones, in simple modulation; no full choral harmony is to be heard in it. That Schiller, at least in his later years, attained a genuine poetic style, and dwelt, more or less, in the perennial regions of his Art, no one will deny: yet still his poetry shows rather like a partial than a universal gift; the laboured product of certain faculties rather than the spontaneous product of his whole nature. At the summit of the pyre there is indeed white flame; but the materials are not all inflamed, perhaps not all ignited. Nay, often it seems to us, as if poetry were, on the whole, not his essential gift; as if his genius were reflective in a still higher degree than creative; philosophical and oratorical rather than poetic. To the last, there is a stiffness in him, a certain infusibility. His genius is not an Æolian-harp for the common wind to play with, and make wild free melody; but a scientific harmonica, which being artfully touched will yield rich notes, though in limited measure.

It may be, indeed, or rather it is highly probable, that of the gifts which lay in him only a small portion was unfolded: for we are to recollect that nothing came to him without a strenuous effort; and that he was called away at middle age. At all events, here as we find him, we should say, that of all his endowments the most perfect is understanding. Accurate, thorough insight is a quality we miss in none of his productions, whatever else may be wanting. He has an intellectual vision, clear, wide, piercing, methodical; a truly philosophic eye. Yet in regard to this also it is to be remarked, that the same simplicity, the same want of universality again displays itself. He looks aloft rather than around. It is in high, far-seeing philosophic views that he delights; in speculations on Art, on the dignity and destiny of Man, rather than on the common doings and interests of Men. Nevertheless these latter, mean as they seem, are boundless in significance; for even the poorest aspect of Nature, especially of living Nature, is a type and manifesta-

tion of the invisible spirit that works in Nature. There is properly no object trivial or insignificant: but every finite thing, could we look well, is as a window, through which solemn vistas are opened into Infinitude itself. But neither as a Poet nor as a Thinker, neither in delineation nor in exposition and discussion, does Schiller more than glance at such objects. For the most part, the Common is to him still the Common; or is idealised, rather as it were by mechanical art than by inspiration: not by deeper poetic or philosophic inspection, disclosing new beauty in its everyday features, but rather by deducting these, by casting them aside, and dwelling on what brighter features may remain in it.

Herein Schiller, as indeed he himself was modestly aware, differs essentially from most great poets; and from none more than from his great contemporary, Goethe. Such intellectual preëminence as this, valuable though it be, is the easiest and the least valuable; a preëminence which, indeed, captivates the general eye, but may, after all, have little intrinsic grandeur. Less in rising into lofty abstractions lies the difficulty, than in seeing well and lovingly the complexities of what is at hand. He is wise who can instruct us and assist us in the business of daily virtuous living; he who trains us to see old truth under Academic formularies may be wise or not, as it chances; but we love to see Wisdom in unpretending forms, to recognise her royal features under week-day vesture.—There may be more true spiritual force in a Proverb than in a Philosophical System. A King in the midst of his body-guards, with all his trumpets, war-horses and gilt standard-bearers, will look great though he be little; but only some Roman Carus can give audience to satrap-ambassadors, while seated on the ground, with a woollen cap, and supping on boiled pease, like a common soldier.

In all Schiller's earlier writings, nay, more or less in the whole of his writings, this aristocratic fastidiousness, this

comparatively barren elevation, appears as a leading characteristic. In speculation he is either altogether abstract and systematic, or he dwells on old conventionally-noble themes; never looking abroad, over the many-coloured stream of life, to elucidate and ennoble it; or only looking on it, so to speak, from a college window. The philosophy even of his Histories, for example, founds itself mainly on the perfectibility of man, the effect of constitutions, of religions, and other such high, purely scientific objects. In his Poetry we have a similar manifestation. The interest turns on prescribed, old-established matters; common love-mania, passionate greatness, enthusiasm for liberty and the like. This even in *Don Karlos*; a work of what may be called his transition-period, the turning-point between his earlier and his later period, where still we find Posa, the favourite hero, 'towering aloft, far-shining, clear, and also cold and vacant, as a sea-beacon.' In after-years, Schiller himself saw well that the greatest lay not here. With unwearied effort he strove to lower and to widen his sphere; and not without success, as many of his Poems testify; for example, the *Lied der Glocke* (Song of the Bell), everyway a noble composition; and, in a still higher degree, the tragedy of *Wilhelm Tell*, the last, and, so far as spirit and style are concerned, the best of all his dramas.

Closely connected with this imperfection, both as cause and as consequence, is Schiller's singular want of Humour. Humour is properly the exponent of low things; that which first renders them poetical to the mind. The man of Humour sees common life, even mean life, under the new light of sportfulness and love; whatever has existence has a charm for him. Humour has justly been regarded as the finest perfection of poetic genius. He who wants it, be his other gifts what they may, has only half a mind; an eye for what is above him, not for what is about him or below him. Now, among all writers of any real poetic genius, we cannot recollect one who, in this respect, exhibits such total deficiency as

Schiller. In his whole writings there is scarcely any vestige of it, scarcely any attempt that way. His nature was without Humour; and he had too true a feeling to adopt any counterfeit in its stead. Thus no drollery or caricature, still less any barren mockery, which, in the hundred cases are all that we find passing current as Humour, discover themselves in Schiller. His works are full of laboured earnestness; he is the gravest of all writers. Some of his critical discussions, especially in the *Æsthetische Briefe*, where he designates the ultimate height of a man's culture by the title *Spieltrieb* (literally, Sport-impulse), prove that he knew what Humour was, and how essential; as indeed, to his intellect, all forms of excellence, even the most alien to his own, were painted with a wonderful fidelity. Nevertheless, he himself attains not that height which he saw so clearly; to the last the *Spieltrieb* could be little more than a theory with him. With the single exception of *Wallensteins Lager*, where too, the Humour, if it be such, is not deep, his other attempts at mirth, fortunately very few, are of the heaviest. A rigid intensity, a serious enthusiastic ardour, majesty rather than grace, still more than lightness or sportfulness, characterises him. Wit he had, such wit as keen intellectual insight can give; yet even of this no large endowment. Perhaps he was too honest, too sincere, for the exercise of wit; too intent on the deeper relations of things to note their more transient collisions. Besides, he dealt in Affirmation, and not in Negation; in which last, it has been said, the material of wit chiefly lies.

These observations are to point out for us the special department and limits of Schiller's excellence; nowise to call in question its reality. Of his noble sense for Truth both in speculation and in action; of his deep genial insight into Nature; and the living harmony in which he renders back what is highest and grandest in Nature, no reader of his works need be reminded. In whatever belongs to the pathetic, the heroic, the tragically elevating, Schiller is at home; a

master; nay, perhaps the greatest of all late poets. To the assiduous student, moreover, much else that lay in Schiller, but was never worked into shape, will become partially visible: deep, inexhaustible mines of thought and feeling; a whole world of gifts, the finest produce of which was but beginning to be realised. To his high-minded, unwearied efforts what was impossible, had length of years been granted him! There is a tone in some of his later pieces, which here and there breathes of the very highest region of Art. Nor are the natural or accidental defects we have noticed in his genius, even as it stands, such as to exclude him from the rank of great Poets. Poets whom the whole world reckons great have, more than once, exhibited the like. Milton, for example, shares most of them with him: like Schiller, he dwells, with full power, only in the high and earnest; in all other provinces exhibiting a certain inaptitude, an elephantine unpliancy: he too has little Humour; his coarse invective has in it contemptuous emphasis enough, yet scarcely any graceful sport. Indeed, on the positive side also, these two worthies are not without a resemblance. Under far other circumstances, with less massiveness and vehement strength of soul, there is in Schiller the same intensity; the same concentration, and towards similar objects, towards whatever is Sublime in Nature and in Art; which sublimities they both, each in his several way, worship with undivided heart. There is not in Schiller's nature the same rich complexity of rhythm as in Milton's, with its depths of linked sweetness; yet in Schiller too there is something of the same pure swelling force, some tone which, like Milton's, is deep, majestic, solemn.

It was as a Dramatic Author that Schiller distinguished himself to the world: yet often we feel as if chance rather than a natural tendency had led him into this province; as if his talent were essentially, in a certain style, lyrical, perhaps even epic, rather than dramatic. He dwelt within himself, and could not without effort, and then only within a certain

range, body forth other forms of being. Nay, much of what is called his poetry, seems to us, as hinted above, oratorical rather than poetical; his first bias might have led him to be a speaker rather than a singer. Nevertheless, a pure fire dwelt deep in his soul; and only in Poetry, of one or the other sort, could this find utterance. The rest of his nature, at the same time, has a certain prosaic rigour; so that not without strenuous and complex endeavours, long persisted in, could its poetic quality evolve itself. Quite pure, and as the all-sovereign element, it perhaps never did evolve itself; and among such complex endeavours, a small accident might influence large portions of its course.

Of Schiller's honest undivided zeal in this great problem of self-cultivation, we have often spoken. What progress he had made, and in spite of what difficulties, appears if we contrast his earlier compositions with those of his later years. A few specimens of both sorts we shall here present. By this means, too, such of our readers as are unacquainted with Schiller may gain some clearer notion of his poetic individuality than any description of ours could give. We shall take the *Robbers*, as his first performance, what he himself calls 'a monster produced by the unnatural union of Genius with Thraldom'; the fierce fuliginous fire that burns in that singular piece will still be discernible in separated passages. The following Scene, even in the yeasty vehicle of our common English version, has not wanted its admirers; it is the Second of the Third Act:

Country on the Danube

THE ROBBERS

Camped on a Height, under Trees: the Horses are grazing on the Hill farther down

Moor. I can no farther [*throws himself on the ground*]. My limbs ache as if ground in pieces. My tongue parched as a potsherd. [*Schweitzer glides away unperceived.*] I would ask you to fetch me a handful of water from the stream; but ye all are wearied to death.

Schwarz. And the wine too is all down there, in our jacks.

Moor. See how lovely the harvest looks! The trees almost breaking under their load. The vine full of hope.

Grimm. It is a plentiful year.

Moor. Think'st thou?—And so *one* toil in the world will be repaid. *One?*—Yet overnight there may come a hailstorm, and shatter it all to ruin.

Schwarz. Possible enough. It might all be ruined two hours before reaping.

Moor. Ay, so say I. It will all be ruined. Why should man prosper in what he has from the Ant, when he fails in what makes him like the Gods?—Or is this the true aim of his Destiny?

Schwarz. I know it not.

Moor. Thou hast said well; and done still better, if thou never triedst to know it!—Brother,—I have looked at men, at their insect anxieties and giant projects—their godlike schemes and mouselike occupations, their wondrous race-running after Happiness;—he trusting to the gallop of his horse,—he to the nose of his ass,—a third to his own legs; this whirling lottery of life, in which so many a creature stakes his innocence, and—his Heaven! all trying for a prize, and—blanks are the whole drawing,—there was not a prize in the batch. It is a drama, Brother, to bring tears into thy eyes, if it tickle thy midriff to laughter.

Schwarz. How gloriously the sun is setting yonder!

Moor [*lost in the view*]. So dies a Hero! To be worshipped!

Grimm. It seems to move thee.

Moor. When I was a lad—it was my darling thought to live so, to die so—[*with suppressed pain*]. It was a lad's thought!

Grimm. I hope so, truly.

Moor [*draws his hat down on his face*]. There was a time—Leave me alone, comrades.

Schwarz. Moor! Moor! What, Devil?—How his colour goes!

Grimm. Ha! What ails him? Is he ill?

Moor. There was a time when I could not sleep, if my evening prayer had been forgotten—

Grimm. Art thou going crazed? Will Moor let such milksop fancies tutor him?

Moor [*lays his head on Grimm's breast*]. Brother! Brother!

Grimm. Come! don't be a child,—I beg—

Moor. Were I a child?—O, were I one!

Grimm. Pooh! pooh!

Schwarz. Cheer up. Look at the brave landscape,—the fine evening.

Moor. Yes, Friends, this world is all so lovely.

Schwarz. There now—that's right.

Moor. This Earth so glorious.

Grimm. Right,—right—that is it.

Moor [*sinking back*]. And I so hideous in this lovely world, and I a monster in this glorious Earth.

Grimm. Out on it!

Moor. My innocence! My innocence!—See, all things are gone forth to bask in the peaceful beam of the Spring: why must I alone inhale the torments of Hell out of the joys of Heaven?—That all should be so happy, all so married together by the spirit of peace!—The whole world *one* family, its Father above—that Father not *mine*!—I alone the castaway, —I alone struck out from the company of the just;—for me no child to lisp my name,—never for me the languishing look of one whom I love, —never, never, the embracing of a bosom-friend [*dashing wildly back*]. Encircled with murderers,—serpents hissing round me,—rushing down to the gulf of perdition on the eddying torrent of wickedness,—amid the flowers of the glad world, a howling Abaddon!

Schwarz [*to the rest*]. How *is* this! I never saw him so.

Moor [*with piercing sorrow*]. O that I might return into my mother's womb,—that I might be born a beggar!—No! I durst not pray, O Heaven, to be as one of these day-labourers—O, I would toil till the blood ran down my temples to buy myself the pleasure of one noontide sleep,—the blessedness of a single tear!

Grimm [*to the rest*]. Patience, a moment. The fit is passing.

Moor. There *was* a time, too, when I could weep—O ye days of peace, thou castle of my father, ye green lovely valleys! O all ye Elysian scenes of my childhood! will ye never come again, never with your balmy sighing cool my burning bosom? Mourn with me, Nature! They will never come again, never cool my burning bosom with their balmy sighing. They are gone! gone! and will not return!

Or take that still wilder monologue of Moor's on the old subject of suicide; in the midnight Forest, among the sleeping Robbers:

He lays aside the lute, and walks up and down in deep thought.

Who shall warrant me?— —'Tis all so dark,—perplexed labyrinths,—no outlet, no loadstar—Were it but *over* with this last draught of breath—*Over* like a sorry farce.—But whence this fierce *Hunger* after *Happiness*? whence this ideal of a *never-reached* perfection? this *continuation* of uncompleted plans?—if the pitiful pressure of this pitiful thing [*holding out a Pistol*] makes the wise man equal with the fool, the coward with the brave, the noble-minded with the caitiff?—There is so divine a harmony in all irrational Nature, why should there be this dissonance in rational?—No! no! there is somewhat beyond, for I have yet never known happiness.

Think ye, I will tremble? spirits of my murdered ones! I will not

tremble [*trembling violently*].—Your feeble dying moan,—your black-choked faces,—your frightfully-gaping wounds are but links of an unbreakable chain of Destiny; and depend at last on my childish sports, on the whims of my nurses and pedagogues, on the temperament of my father, on the blood of my mother—[*shaken with horror*]. Why has my Perillus made of me a Brazen Bull to roast mankind in my glowing belly?

[*Gazing on the Pistol*] TIME and ETERNITY—linked together by a single moment!—Dread key, that shuttest behind me the prison of Life, and before me openest the dwelling of eternal Night—say—O, say,—*whither*, —*whither* wilt thou lead me? Foreign, never circumnavigated Land!—See, manhood waxes faint under *this* image; the effort of the finite gives up, and Fancy, the capricious ape of Sense, juggles our credulity with strange shadows.—No! no! It becomes not a man to waver. Be what thou wilt, *nameless Yonder*—so this Me keep but true. Be what thou wilt, so I take *myself* along with me—!—Outward things are but the colouring of the man—I am my Heaven and my Hell.

What if Thou shouldst send me *companionless* to some burnt and blasted circle of the Universe; which Thou hast banished from thy sight; where the lone darkness and the motionless desert were my prospects—forever?—I would people the silent wilderness with my fantasies; I should have Eternity for leisure to unravel the perplexed image of the boundless woe.—Or wilt Thou lead me through still other births; still other scenes of pain, from stage to stage—onwards to Annihilation? The life-threads that are to be woven for me Yonder, cannot I tear them asunder, as I do these?—Thou canst make me Nothing;—but *this* freedom canst Thou not take from me. [*He loads the Pistol. Suddenly he stops.*] And shall I for terror of a miserable life—die?—Shall I give wretchedness the victory over me?—No, I will endure it [*he throws the Pistol away*]. Let misery blunt itself on my pride! I will go through with it.[1]

And now with these ferocities, and Sibylline frenzies, compare the placid strength of the following delineation, also of a stern character, from the *Maid of Orleans*; where Talbot, the grey veteran, dark, unbelieving, indomitable, passes down, as he thinks, to the land of utter Nothingness, contemptuous even of the Fate that destroys him, and

> In death reposes on the soil of France,
> Like hero on his unsurrendered shield.

[1] Act iv. Scene 6.

It is the sixth Scene of the third Act; in the heat of a Battle:

The scene changes to an open Space encircled with Trees. During the music Soldiers are seen hastily retreating across the Background

TALBOT, *leaning on* FASTOLF, *and accompanied by Soldiers*
Soon after, LIONEL

TALBOT

Here, set me down beneath this tree, and you
Betake yourselves again to battle: quick!
I need no help to die.

FASTOLF

O day of woe! [*Lionel enters.*
Look what a sight awaits you, Lionel!
Our leader wounded, dying!

LIONEL

God forbid!
O noble Talbot, this is not a time to die:
Yield not to Death; force faltering Nature
By your strength of soul, that life depart not!

TALBOT

In vain! the day of Destiny is come
That levels with the dust our power in France.
In vain, in the fierce clash of desp'rate battle,
Have I risk'd my utmost to withstand it:
The bolt has smote and crush'd me, and I lie
To rise no more forever. Rheims is lost;
Make haste to rescue Paris.

LIONEL

Paris is the Dauphin's:
A post arrived even now with th' evil news
It had surrender'd.

TALBOT [*tears away his bandages*]

Then flow out, ye life-streams;
This sun is growing loathsome to me.

LIONEL

Fastolf,
Convey him to the rear: this post can hold
Few instants more; yon coward knaves fall back,
Resistless comes the Witch, and havoc round her.

TALBOT

Madness, thou conquerest, and I must yield:
Against Stupidity the Gods themselves are powerless.
High Reason, radiant Daughter of the head of God,
Wise Foundress of the system of the Universe,
Conductress of the Stars, who art thou, then,
If tied to th' tail o' th' wild horse, Superstition,
Thou must plunge, eyes open, vainly shrieking,
Sheer down with that drunk Beast to the Abyss?
Cursed who sets his life upon the great
And dignified; and with forecasting spirit
Lays out wise plans! The Fool-King's is this World.

LIONEL

O! Death is near! Think of your God, and pray!

TALBOT

Were we, as brave men, worsted by the brave,
'T had been but Fortune's common fickleness:
But that a paltry Farce should tread us down!—
Did toil and peril, all our earnest life,
Deserve no graver issue?

LIONEL [*grasps his hand*]

Talbot, farewell!
The meed of bitter tears I 'll duly pay you,
When the fight is done, should I outlive it.
But now Fate calls me to the field, where yet
She wav'ring sits, and shakes her doubtful urn.
Farewell! we meet beyond the unseen shore.
Brief parting for long friendship! God be with you! [*Exit*

TALBOT

Soon it is over, and to th' Earth I render,
To th' everlasting Sun, the transient atoms
Which for pain and pleasure join'd to form me;
And of the mighty Talbot, whose renown
Once fill'd the world, remains nought but a handful
Of flitting dust. Thus man comes to his end;
And all our conquest in the fight of Life
Is knowledge that 'tis Nothing, and contempt
For hollow shows which once we chas'd and worshipp'd.

SCENE VII

Enter CHARLES, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *and Soldiers*

BURGUNDY

The trench is stormed.

DUNOIS

Bravo! The fight is ours.

CHARLES [*observing Talbot*].

Ha! who is this that to the light of day
Is bidding his constrained and sad farewell?
His bearing speaks no common man: go, haste,
Assist him, if assistance yet avail.
[*Soldiers from the Dauphin's suite step forward.*

FASTOLF

Back! Keep away! Approach not the Departing,
Him whom in life ye never wished too near.

BURGUNDY

What do I see? Great Talbot in his blood!
[*He goes towards him. Talbot gazes fixedly at him, and dies.*

FASTOLF

Off, Burgundy! With th' aspect of a Traitor
Disturb not the last moment of a Hero.

The 'Power-words and Thunder-words,' as the Germans call them, so frequent in the *Robbers*,[1] are altogether wanting here; that volcanic fury has assuaged itself; instead of smoke and red lava, we have sunshine and a verdant world. For still more striking examples of this benignant change, we might refer to many scenes (too long for our present purposes) in *Wallenstein*, and indeed in all the Dramas which followed this, and most of all in *Wilhelm Tell*, which is the latest of them. The careful, and in general truly poetic structure of these works, considered as complete Poems, would exhibit it infinitely better; but for this object, larger limits than ours at present, and studious Readers as well as a Reviewer, were essential.

[1] Thus, to take one often-cited instance, Moor's simple question, 'Whether there is any powder left?' receives this emphatic answer: 'Powder enough to blow the Earth into the Moon!'

In his smaller Poems the like progress is visible. Schiller's works should all be dated, as we study them; but indeed the most, by internal evidence, date themselves.—Besides the *Lied der Glocke*, already mentioned, there are many lyrical pieces of high merit; particularly a whole series of *Ballads*, nearly every one of which is true and poetical. The *Ritter Toggenburg*, the *Dragon-fight*, the *Diver*, are all well known; the *Cranes of Ibycus* has in it, under this simple form, something Old-Grecian, an emphasis, a prophetic gloom which might seem borrowed even from the spirit of Æschylus. But on these, or any farther on the other poetical works of Schiller, we must not dilate at present. One little piece, which lies by us translated, we may give, as a specimen of his style in this lyrical province, and therewith terminate this part of our subject. It is entitled *Alpenlied* (Song of the Alps), and seems to require no commentary. Perhaps something of the clear, melodious, yet still somewhat metallic tone of the original may penetrate even through our version.

Song of the Alps

By the edge of the chasm is a slippery Track,
The torrent beneath, and the mist hanging o'er thee;
The cliffs of the mountain, huge, rugged and black,
Are frowning like giants before thee:
And, wouldst thou not waken the sleeping Lawine,
Walk silent and soft through the deadly ravine.

That Bridge, with its dizzying perilous span,
Aloft o'er the gulf and its flood suspended,
Think'st thou it was built by the art of man,
By his hand that grim old arch was bended?
Far down in the jaws of the gloomy abyss
The water is boiling and hissing,—forever will hiss.

That Gate through the rocks is as darksome and drear,
As if to the region of Shadows it carried:
Yet enter! A sweet laughing landscape is here,
Where the Spring with the Autumn is married.
From the world with its sorrows and warfare and wail,
O, could I but hide in this bright little vale!

Four Rivers rush down from on high,
Their spring will be hidden forever;
Their course is to all the four points of the sky,
To each point of the sky is a river;
And fast as they start from their old Mother's feet,
They dash forth, and no more will they meet.

Two Pinnacles rise to the depths of the Blue:
Aloft on their white summits glancing,
Bedeck'd in their garments of golden dew,
The Clouds of the sky are dancing;
Their threading alone their lightsome maze,
Uplifted apart from all mortals' gaze.

And high on her ever-enduring throne
The Queen of the mountains reposes;
Her head serene, and azure, and lone,
A diamond crown encloses;
The Sun with his darts shoots round it keen and hot,
He gilds it always, he warms it not.

Of Schiller's Philosophic talent, still more of the results he had arrived at in philosophy, there were much to be said and thought; which we must not enter upon here. As hinted above, his primary endowment seems to us fully as much philosophical as poetical: his intellect, at all events, is peculiarly of that character; strong, penetrating, yet systematic and scholastic, rather than intuitive; and manifesting this tendency both in the objects it treats, and in its mode of treating them. The Transcendental Philosophy, which arose in Schiller's busiest era, could not remain without influence on him: he had carefully studied Kant's System, and appears to have not only admitted but zealously appropriated its fundamental doctrines; remoulding them, however, into his own peculiar forms, so that they seem no longer borrowed, but permanently acquired, not less Schiller's than Kant's. Some, perhaps little aware of his natural wants and tendencies, are of opinion that these speculations did not profit him: Schiller himself, on the other hand, appears to have been well contented with his Philosophy; in which, as harmonised with

his Poetry, the assurance and safe anchorage for his moral nature might lie.

'From the opponents of the New Philosophy,' says he, 'I expect not that tolerance, which is shown to every other system, no better seen into than this: for Kant's Philosophy itself, in its leading points, practises no tolerance; and bears much too rigorous a character, to leave any room for accommodation. But in my eyes this does it honour; proving how little it can endure to have truth tampered with. Such a Philosophy will not be discussed with a mere shake of the head. In the open, clear, accessible field of Inquiry it builds up its system; seeks no shade, makes no reservation: but even as it treats its neighbours, so it requires to be treated; and may be forgiven for lightly esteeming everything but Proofs. Nor am I terrified to think that the Law of Change, from which no human and no divine work finds grace, will operate on this Philosophy, as on every other, and one day its Form will be destroyed: but its Foundations will not have this destiny to fear; for ever since mankind has existed, and any Reason among mankind, these same first principles have been admitted, and on the whole acted upon.'[1]

Schiller's philosophical performances relate chiefly to matters of Art; not, indeed, without significant glances into still more important regions of speculation: nay, Art, as he viewed it, has its basis on the most important interests of man, and of itself involves the harmonious adjustment of these. We have already undertaken to present our readers, on a future occasion, with some abstract of the *Æsthetic Letters*, one of the deepest, most compact pieces of reasoning we are anywhere acquainted with: by that opportunity, the general character of Schiller, as a Philosopher, will best fall to be discussed. Meanwhile, the two following brief passages, as some indication of his views on the highest of all philosophical questions, may stand here without commentary. He is speaking of *Wilhelm Meister*, and in the first extract, of the *Fair Saint's Confessions*, which occupy the Sixth Book of that work:

'The transition from Religion in general to the Christian Religion, by the experience of sin, is excellently conceived. * * * I find virtually in the Christian System the rudiments of the Highest and Noblest; and the different phases of this System, in practical life, are so offensive and

[1] *Correspondence with Goethe*, i. 58.

mean, precisely because they are bungled representations of that same Highest. If you study the specific character of Christianity, what distinguishes it from all monotheistic Religions, it lies in nothing else than in that *making-dead of the Law*, the removal of that Kantean Imperative, instead of which Christianity requires a free Inclination. It is thus, in its pure form, a representing of Moral Beauty, or the Incarnation of the Holy; and in this sense, the only *æsthetic* Religion : hence, too, I explain to myself why it so prospers with female natures, and only in women is now to be met with under a tolerable figure.'[1]

'But in seriousness,' he says elsewhere, 'whence may it proceed that you have had a man educated, and in all points equipt, without ever coming upon certain wants which only Philosophy can meet? I am convinced it is entirely attributable to the *æsthetic direction* you have taken, through the whole Romance. Within the æsthetic temper there arises no want of those grounds of comfort, which are to be drawn from speculation : such a temper has self-subsistence, has infinitude, within itself; only when the Sensual and the Moral in man strive hostilely together, need help be sought of pure Reason. A healthy poetic nature wants, as you yourself say, no Moral Law, no Rights of Man, no Political Metaphysics. You might have added as well, it wants no Deity, no Immortality, to stay and uphold itself withal. Those three points round which, in the long-run, all speculation turns, may in truth afford such a nature matter for poetic play, but can never become serious concerns and necessities for it.'[2]

This last seems a singular opinion ; and may prove, if it be correct, that Schiller himself was no 'healthy poetic nature'; for undoubtedly with him those three points were 'serious concerns and necessities'; as many portions of his works, and various entire treatises, will testify. Nevertheless, it plays an important part in his theories of Poetry; and often, under milder forms, returns on us there.

But, without entering farther on those complex topics, we must here for the present take leave of Schiller. Of his merits we have all along spoken rather on the negative side; and we rejoice in feeling authorised to do so. That any German writer, especially one so dear to us, should already stand so high with British readers that, in admiring him, the critic may also, without prejudice to right feeling on the subject,

[1] *Correspondence*, i. 195. [2] Ib. ii. 131.

coolly judge of him, cannot be other than a gratifying circumstance. Perhaps there is no other true Poet of that nation with whom the like course would be suitable.

Connected with this there is one farther observation we must make before concluding. Among younger students of German Literature, the question often arises, and is warmly mooted: Whether Schiller or Goethe is the greater Poet? Of this question we must be allowed to say that it seems rather a slender one, and for two reasons. First, because Schiller and Goethe are of totally dissimilar endowments and endeavours, in regard to all matters intellectual, and cannot well be compared together as Poets. Secondly, because if the question mean to ask, which Poet is on the whole the rarer and more excellent, as probably it does, it must be considered as long ago abundantly answered. To the clear-sighted and modest Schiller, above all, such a question would have appeared surprising. No one knew better than himself, that as Goethe was a born Poet, so he was in great part a made Poet; that as the one spirit was intuitive, all-embracing, instinct with melody, so the other was scholastic, divisive, only partially and as it were artificially melodious. Besides, Goethe has lived to perfect his natural gift, which the less happy Schiller was not permitted to do. The former accordingly is the national Poet; the latter is not, and never could have been. We once heard a German remark that readers till their twenty-fifth year usually prefer Schiller; after their twenty-fifth year, Goethe. This probably was no unfair illustration of the question. Schiller can seem higher than Goethe only because he is narrower. Thus to unpractised eyes, a Peak of Teneriffe, nay, a Strasburg Minster, when we stand on it, may seem higher than a Chimborazo; because the former rise abruptly, without abutment or environment; the latter rises gradually, carrying half a world aloft with it; and only the deeper azure of the heavens, the widened horizon, the 'eternal sunshine,' disclose to the geographer that the 'Region of Change' lies far below him.

However, let us not divide these two Friends, who in life were so benignantly united. Without asserting for Schiller any claim that even enemies can dispute, enough will remain for him. We may say that, as a Poet and Thinker, he attained to a perennial Truth, and ranks among the noblest productions of his century and nation. Goethe may continue *the* German Poet, but neither through long generations can Schiller be forgotten. 'His works too, the memory of what he did and was, will arise afar off like a towering landmark in the solitude of the Past, when distance shall have dwarfed into invisibility many lesser people that once encompassed him, and hid him from the near beholder.'

THE NIBELUNGEN LIED[1]

[1831]

In the year 1757, the Swiss Professor Bodmer printed an ancient poetical manuscript, under the title of *Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage* (Chriemhilde's Revenge, and the Lament); which may be considered as the first of a series, or stream of publications and speculations still rolling on, with increased current, to the present day. Not, indeed, that all these had their source or determining cause in so insignificant a circumstance; their source, or rather thousand sources, lay far elsewhere. As has often been remarked, a certain antiquarian tendency in literature, a fonder, more earnest looking back into the Past, began about that time to manifest itself in all nations (witness our own *Percy's Reliques*): this was among the first distinct symptoms of it in Germany; where, as with ourselves, its manifold effects are still visible enough.

Some fifteen years after Bodmer's publication, which, for the rest, is not celebrated as an editorial feat, one C. H. Müller undertook a *Collection of German Poems from the Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries;* wherein, among other articles, he reprinted Bodmer's *Chriemhilde* and *Klage*, with a highly remarkable addition prefixed to the former, essential indeed to the right understanding of it; and the whole now stood before the world as one Poem, under the name of the *Nibelungen Lied*, or Lay of the Nibelungen. It has since been ascertained that the *Klage* is a foreign inferior

[1] Westminster Review, No. 29.—*Das Nibelungen Lied, übersetzt von Karl Simrock* (The Nibelungen Lied, translated by Karl Simrock). 2 vols. 12mo. Berlin, 1827.

appendage; at best, related only as epilogue to the main work: meanwhile out of this *Nibelungen*, such as it was, there soon proceeded new inquiries and kindred enterprises. For much as the Poem, in the shape it here bore, was defaced and marred, it failed not to attract observation: to all open-minded lovers of poetry, especially where a strong patriotic feeling existed, the singular antique *Nibelungen* was an interesting appearance. Johannes Müller, in his famous *Swiss History*, spoke of it in warm terms: subsequently, August Wilhelm Schlegel, through the medium of the *Deutsche Museum*, succeeded in awakening something like a universal popular feeling on the subject; and, as a natural consequence, a whole host of Editors and Critics, of deep and of shallow endeavour, whose labours we yet see in progress. The *Nibelungen* has now been investigated, translated, collated, commented upon, with more or less result, to almost boundless lengths: besides the Work named at the head of this Paper, and which stands there simply as one of the latest, we have Versions into the modern tongue by Von der Hagen, by Hinsberg, Lachmann, Büsching, Zeune, the last in Prose, and said to be worthless; Criticisms, Introductions, Keys, and so forth, by innumerable others, of whom we mention only Docen and the Brothers Grimm.

By which means, not only has the Poem itself been elucidated with all manner of researches, but its whole environment has come forth in new light: the scene and personages it relates to, the other fictions and traditions connected with it, have attained a new importance and coherence. Manuscripts, that for ages had lain dormant, have issued from their archives into public view; books that had circulated only in mean guise for the amusement of the people, have become important, not to one or two virtuosos, but to the general body of the learned: and now a whole System of antique Teutonic Fiction and Mythology unfolds itself, shedding here and there a real though feeble and uncertain glimmer over what was once the total darkness of the old Time. No fewer than Fourteen ancient

Traditionary Poems, all strangely intertwisted, and growing out of and into one another, have come to light among the Germans; who now, in looking back, find that they too, as well as the Greeks, have their Heroic Age, and round the old Valhalla, as their Northern Pantheon, a world of demi-gods and wonders.

Such a phenomenon, unexpected till of late, cannot but interest a deep-thinking, enthusiastic people. For the *Nibelungen* especially, which lies as the centre and distinct keystone of the whole too chaotic System,—let us say rather, blooms as a firm sunny island in the middle of these cloud-covered, ever-shifting sand-whirlpools,—they cannot sufficiently testify their love and veneration. Learned professors lecture on the *Nibelungen* in public schools, with a praiseworthy view to initiate the German youth in love of their fatherland; from many zealous and nowise ignorant critics we hear talk of a 'great Northern Epos,' of a 'German Iliad'; the more saturnine are shamed into silence, or hollow mouth-homage: thus from all quarters comes a sound of joyful acclamation; the *Nibelungen* is welcomed as a precious national possession, recovered after six centuries of neglect, and takes undisputed place among the sacred books of German literature.

Of these curious transactions some rumour has not failed to reach us in England, where our minds, from their own antiquarian disposition, were willing enough to receive it. Abstracts and extracts of the *Nibelungen* have been printed in our language; there have been disquisitions on it in our Reviews: hitherto, however, such as nowise to exhaust the subject. On the contrary, where so much was to be told at once, the speaker might be somewhat puzzled where to begin: it was a much readier method to begin with the end, or with any part of the middle, than like Hamilton's Ram (whose example is too little followed in literary narrative) to begin with the beginning. Thus has our stock of intelligence come rushing out on us quite promiscuously and pellmell; whereby the whole matter could not but acquire a tortuous, confused,

altogether inexplicable and even dreary aspect; and the class of 'well-informed persons' now find themselves in that uncomfortable position, where they are obliged to profess admiration, and at the same time feel that, except by name, they know not what the thing admired is. Such a position towards the venerable *Nibelungen*, which is no less bright and graceful than historically significant, cannot be the right one. Moreover, as appears to us, it might be somewhat mended by very simple means. Let any one that had honestly read the *Nibelungen*, which in these days is no surprising achievement, only tell us what he found there, and nothing that he did not find: we should then know something, and, what were still better, be ready for knowing more. To search out the secret roots of such a production, ramified through successive layers of centuries, and drawing nourishment from each, may be work, and too hard work, for the deepest philosopher and critic; but to look with natural eyes on what part of it stands visibly above ground, and record his own experiences thereof, is what any reasonable mortal, if he will take heed, can do.

Some such slight service we here intend proffering to our readers: let them glance with us a little into that mighty maze of Northern Archæology; where, it may be, some pleasant prospects will open. If the *Nibelungen* is what we have called it, a firm sunny island amid the weltering chaos of antique tradition, it must be worth visiting on general grounds; nay, if the primeval rudiments of it have the antiquity assigned them, it belongs specially to us English *Teutones* as well as to the German.

Far be it from us, meanwhile, to venture rashly, or farther than is needful, into that same traditionary chaos, fondly named the 'Cycle of Northern Fiction,' with its Fourteen Sectors (or separate Poems), which are rather Fourteen shoreless Limbos, where we hear of pieces containing 'a hundred thousand verses,' and 'seventy thousand verses,' as of a quite natural affair! How travel through that inane country; by

what art discover the little grain of Substance that casts such multiplied immeasurable Shadows? The primeval Mythus, were it at first philosophical truth, or were it historical incident, floats too vaguely on the breath of men: each successive Singer and Redactor furnishes it with new personages, new scenery, to please a new audience; each has the privilege of inventing, and the far wider privilege of borrowing and new-modelling from *all* that have preceded him. Thus though Tradition may have but one root, it grows like a Banian, into a whole overarching labyrinth of trees. Or rather might we say, it is a Hall of Mirrors, where in pale light each mirror reflects, convexly or concavely, not only some real Object, but the Shadows of this in other mirrors; which again do the like for it: till in such reflection and re-reflection the whole immensity is filled with dimmer and dimmer shapes; and no firm scene lies round us, but a dislocated, distorted chaos, fading away on all hands, in the distance, into utter night. Only to some brave Von der Hagen, furnished with indefatigable ardour, and a deep, almost religious love, is it given to find sure footing there, and see his way. All those *Dukes of Aquitania*, therefore, and *Etzel's Court-holdings*, and *Dietrichs* and *Sigenots* we shall leave standing where they are. Such as desire farther information will find an intelligible account of the whole Series or Cycle, in Messrs. Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*; and all possible furtherance, in the numerous German works above alluded to; among which Von der Hagen's writings, though not the readiest, are probably the safest guides. But for us, our business here is with the *Nibelungen*, the inhabited poetic country round which all these wildernesses lie; only as environments of which, as routes to which, are they of moment to us. Perhaps our shortest and smoothest route will be through the *Heldenbuch* (Hero-book); which is greatly the most important of these subsidiary Fictions, not without interest of its own, and closely related to the *Nibelungen*. This *Heldenbuch*, therefore, we

must now address ourselves to traverse with all despatch. At the present stage of the business too, we shall forbear any historical inquiry and argument concerning the date and local habitation of those Traditions; reserving what little is to be said on that matter till the Traditions themselves have become better known to us. Let the reader, on trust for the present, transport himself into the twelfth or thirteenth century; and therefrom looking back into the sixth or fifth, see what presents itself.

Of the *Heldenbuch*, tried on its own merits, and except as illustrating that other far worthier Poem, or at most as an old national, and still in some measure popular book, we should have felt strongly inclined to say, as the Curate in *Don Quixote* so often did, *Al corral con ello*, Out of window with it! Doubtless there are touches of beauty in the work, and even a sort of heartiness and antique quaintness in its wildest follies; but on the whole that George-and-Dragon species of composition has long ceased to find favour with any one; and except for its groundwork, more or less discernible, of old Northern Fiction, this *Heldenbuch* has little to distinguish it from these. Nevertheless, what is worth remark, it seems to have been a far higher favourite than the *Nibelungen* with ancient readers: it was printed soon after the invention of printing; some think in 1472, for there is no place or date on the first edition; at all events, in 1491, in 1509, and repeatedly since; whereas the *Nibelungen*, though written earlier, and in worth immeasurably superior, had to remain in manuscript three centuries longer. From which, for the thousandth time, inferences might be drawn as to the infallibility of popular taste, and its value as a criterion for poetry. However, it is probably in virtue of this neglect, that the *Nibelungen* boasts of its actual purity; that it now comes before us, clear and graceful as it issued from the old Singer's head and heart; not overloaded with Ass-eared Giants, Fiery Dragons, Dwarfs and Hairy Women,

as the *Heldenbuch* is, many of which, as charity would hope, may be the produce of a later age than that famed *Swabian Era*, to which these poems, as we now see them, are commonly referred. Indeed, one Casper von Roen is understood to have passed the whole *Heldenbuch* through his limbec, in the fifteenth century; but like other rectifiers, instead of purifying it, to have only drugged it with still fiercer ingredients to suit the sick appetite of the time.

Of this drugged and adulterated *Hero-book* (the only one we yet have, though there is talk of a better) we shall quote the long Title-page of Lessing's Copy, the edition of 1560; from which, with a few intercalated observations, the reader's curiosity may probably obtain what little satisfaction it wants:

Das Heldenbuch, welchs auffs new corrigirt und gebessert ist, mit shönen Figuren geziert. Gedrückt zu Frankfurt am Mayn, durch Weygand Han und Sygmund Feyerabend, etc. That is to say:

'The *Hero-book*, which is of new corrected and improved, adorned with beautiful Figures. Printed at Frankfurt on the Mayn, through Weygand Han and Sygmund Feyerabend.

'*Part First* saith of Kaiser Ottnit and the little King Elberich, how they with great peril, over sea, in Heathendom, won from a king his daughter (and how he in lawful marriage took her to wife).'

From which announcement the reader already guesses the contents: how this little King Elberich was a Dwarf or Elf, some half-span long, yet full of cunning practices, and the most helpful activity; nay, stranger still, had been Kaiser Ottnit of *Lampartei* or Lombardy's father,—having had his own ulterior views in that indiscretion. How they sailed with Messina ships, into Paynim land; fought with that unspeakable Turk, King Machabol, in and about his fortress and metropolis of Montebur, which was all stuck round with Christian heads; slew from seventy to a hundred thousand of the Infidels at one heat; saw the lady on the

battlements; and at length, chiefly by Dwarf Elberich's help, carried her off in triumph; wedded her in Messina; and without difficulty, rooting out the Mahometan prejudice, converted her to the creed of Mother Church. The fair runaway seems to have been of a gentle tractable disposition, very different from old Machabol; concerning whom it is here chiefly to be noted that Dwarf Elberich, rendering himself invisible on their first interview, plucks out a handful of hair from his chin; thereby increasing to a tenfold pitch the royal choler; and, what is still more remarkable, furnishing the poet Wieland, six centuries afterwards, with the critical incident in his *Oberon*. As for the young lady herself, we cannot but admit that she was well worth sailing to Heathendom for; and shall here, as our sole specimen of that old German doggerel, give the description of her, as she first appeared on the battlements during the fight; subjoining a version as verbal and literal as the plainest prose can make it. Considered as a detached passage, it is perhaps the finest we have met with in the *Heldenbuch*.

Ihr herz brann also schone,
Recht als ein rot rubein,
Gleich dem vollen mone
Gaben ihr äuglein schein.
Sich hett die maget reine
Mit rosen wohl bekleid
Und auch mit berlin kleine;
Niemand da tröst die meid.

Her heart burnt (with anxiety) as beautiful
Just as a red ruby,
Like the full moon
Her eyes (eyelings, pretty eyes) gave sheen.
Herself had the maiden pure
Well adorned with roses,
And also with pearls small:
No one there comforted the maid.

Sie war schön an dem leibe,
Und zu den seiten schmal;

Recht als ein kertze scheibe
Wohlgeschaffen überall:
Ihr beyden händ gemeine
Dars ihr gentz nichts gebrach;
Ihr näglein schön und reine,
Das man sich darin besach.

She was fair of body,
And in the waist slender;
Right as a (golden) candlestick
Well-fashioned everywhere:
Her two hands proper,
So that she wanted nought:
Her little nails fair and pure,
That you could see yourself therein.

Ihr har war schön umbfangen
Mit edler seiden fein;
Das liess sie nieder hangen,
Das hübsche magedlein.
Sie trug ein kron mit steinen,
Sie war von gold so rot;
Elberich dem viel kleinen
War zu der magte not.

Her hair was beautifully girt
With noble silk (band) fine;
She let it flow down,
The lovely maidling.
She wore a crown with jewels,
It was of gold so red:
For Elberich the very small
The maid had need (to console her).

Da vornen in den kronen
Lag ein karfunkelstein,
Der in dem pallast schonen
Aecht als ein kertz erschein;
Auf jrem hauyt das hare
War lauter und auch fein,
Es leuchtet also klare
Recht als der sonnen schein.

There in front of the crown
Lay a carbuncle-stone,

Which in the palace fair
Even as a taper seemed;
On her head the hair
Was glossy and also fine,
It shone as bright
Even as the sun's sheen.

Die magt die stand alleine,
Gar trawrig war jr mut;
Ihr farb und die war reine,
Lieblich wie milch und blut;
Her durch jr zöpffe reinen
Schien jr hals als der schnee:
Elberich dem viel kleinen
That der maget jammer weh.

The maid she stood alone,
Right sad was her mind;
Her colour it was pure,
Lovely as milk and blood:
Out through her pure locks
Shone her neck like the snow.
Elberich the very small
Was touched with the maiden's sorrow.

Happy man was Kaiser Ottnit, blessed with such a wife, after all his travail;—had not the Turk Machabol cunningly sent him, in revenge, a box of young Dragons, or Dragon-eggs, by the hands of a caitiff Infidel, contriver of the mischief; by whom in due course of time they were hatched and nursed, to the infinite woe of all Lampartei, and ultimately to the death of Kaiser Ottnit himself, whom they swallowed and attempted to digest, once without effect, but the next time too fatally, crown and all!

'*Part Second* announceth (*meldet*) of Herr Hugdietrich and his son Wolfdietrich; how they, for justice-sake, oft by their doughty acts succoured distressed persons, with other bold heroes that stood by them in extremity.'

Concerning which Hugdietrich, Emperor of Greece, and his son Wolfdietrich, one day the renowned Dietrich of Bern, we can here say little more than that the former trained him-

self to sempstress-work; and for many weeks plied his needle, before he could get wedded and produce Wolfdietrich; who coming into the world in this clandestine manner, was let down into the castle-ditch, and like Romulus and Remus nursed by a Wolf, whence his name. However, after never-imagined adventures, with enchanters and enchantresses, pagans and giants, in all quarters of the globe, he finally, with utmost effort, slaughtered those Lombardy Dragons; then married Kaiser Ottnit's widow, whom he had rather flirted with before; and so lived universally respected in his new empire, performing yet other notable achievements. One strange property he had, sometimes useful to him, sometimes hurtful: that his breath, when he became angry, grew flame, red-hot, and would take the temper out of swords. We find him again in the *Nibelungen*, among King Etzel's (Attila's) followers; a staid, cautious, yet still invincible man; on which occasion, though with great reluctance, he is forced to interfere, and does so with effect. Dietrich is the favourite hero of all those Southern Fictions, and well acknowledged in the Northern also, where the chief man, however, as we shall find, is not he but Siegfried.

'*Part Third* showeth of the Rose-garden at Worms, which was planted by Chrimhilte, King Gibich's daughter; whereby afterwards most part of those Heroes and Giants came to destruction and were slain.'

In this Third Part the Southern or Lombard Heroes come into contact and collision with another as notable Northern class, and for us much more important. Chriemhild, whose ulterior history makes such a figure in the *Nibelungen*, had, it would seem, near the ancient city of Worms, a Rose-garden, some seven English miles in circuit; fenced only by a silk thread; wherein, however, she maintained Twelve stout fighting-men; several of whom, as Hagen, Volker, her three Brothers, above all the gallant Siegfried her betrothed, we shall meet with again: these, so unspeakable was their prowess, sufficed to defend the silk-thread Garden against all

mortals. Our good antiquary, Von der Hagen, imagines that this Rose-garden business (in the primeval Tradition) glances obliquely at the Ecliptic with its Twelve Signs, at Jupiter's fight with the Titans, and we know not what confused skirmishing in the Utgard, or Asgard, or Midgard of the Scandinavians. Be this as it may, Chriemhild, we are here told, being very beautiful and very wilful, boasts, in the pride of her heart, that no heroes on earth are to be compared with hers; and hearing accidentally that Dietrich of Bern has a high character in this line, forthwith challenges him to visit Worms, and with eleven picked men to do battle there against those other Twelve champions of Christendom that watch her Rose-garden. Dietrich, in a towering passion at the style of the message, which was 'surly and stout,' instantly pitches upon his eleven seconds, who also are to be principals; and with a retinue of other sixty thousand, by quick stages, in which obstacles enough are overcome, reaches Worms, and declares himself ready. Among these eleven Lombard heroes of his are likewise several whom we meet with again in the *Nibelungen*; beside Dietrich himself, we have the old Duke Hildebrand, Wolfhart, Ortwin. Notable among them, in another way, is Monk Ilsan, a truculent grey-bearded fellow, equal to any Friar Tuck in *Robin Hood.*

The conditions of fight are soon agreed on: there are to be twelve successive duels, each challenger being expected to find his match; and the prize of victory is a Rose-garland from Chriemhild, and *ein Helssen und ein Küssen*, that is to say virtually, one kiss from her fair lips to each. But here as it ever should do, Pride gets a fall; for Chriemhild's bully-hectors are, in divers ways, all successively felled to the ground by the Berners; some of whom, as old Hildebrand, will not even take her Kiss when it is due: even Siegfried himself, most reluctantly engaged with by Dietrich, and for a while victorious, is at last forced to seek shelter in her lap. Nay, Monk Ilsan, after the regular fight is over, and his part

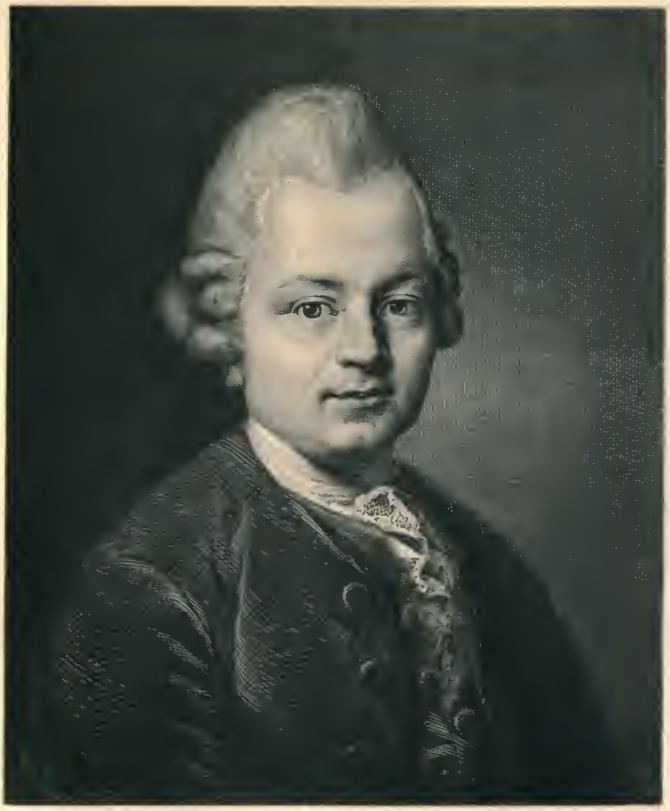
in it well performed, calls out in succession fifty-two other idle Champions of the Garden, part of them Giants, and routs the whole fraternity; thereby earning, besides his own regular allowance, fifty-two spare Garlands, and fifty-two several Kisses; in the course of which latter, Chriemhild's cheek, a just punishment as seemed, was scratched to the drawing of blood by his rough beard. It only remains to be added, that King Gibich, Chriemhild's Father, is now fain to do homage for his kingdom to Dietrich; who returns triumphant to his own country; where also, Monk Ilsan, according to promise, distributes these fifty-two Garlands among his fellow Friars, crushing a garland on the bare crown of each, till 'the red blood ran over their ears.' Under which hard, but not undeserved treatment, they all agreed to pray for remission of Ilsan's sins: indeed, such as continued refractory he tied together by the beards, and hung pair-wise over poles; whereby the stoutest soon gave in.

So endeth here this ditty
Of strife from woman's pride:
God on our griefs take pity,
And Mary still by us abide.

'In *Part Fourth* is announced (*gemelt*) of the little King Laurin, the Dwarf, how he encompassed his Rose-garden with so great manhood and art-magic, till at last he was vanquished by the heroes, and forced to become their Juggler, with etc. etc.'

Of which Fourth and happily last part we shall here say nothing; inasmuch as, except that certain of our old heroes again figure there, it has no coherence or connexion with the rest of the *Heldenbuch*; and is simply a new tale, which by way of episode Heinrich von Ofterdingen, as we learn from his own words, had subsequently appended thereto. He says:

Heinrich von Ofterdingen
This story hath been singing,
To the joy of Princes bold,
They gave him silver and gold,



Lessing.

Moreover pennies and garments rich:
Here endeth this Book the which
Doth sing our noble Heroes' story:
God help us all to heavenly glory.

Such is some outline of the famous *Heldenbuch*; on which it is not our business here to add any criticism. The fact that it has so long been popular betokens a certain worth in it; the kind and degree of which is also in some measure apparent. In poetry 'the rude man,' it has been said, 'requires only to see something going on; the man of more refinement wishes to feel; the truly refined man must be made to reflect.' For the first of these classes our *Hero-book*, as has been apparent enough, provides in abundance; for the other two scantily, indeed for the second not at all. Nevertheless our estimate of this work, which as a series of Antique Traditions may have considerable meaning, is apt rather to be too low. Let us remember that this is not the original *Heldenbuch* which we now see; but only a version of it into the Knight-errant dialect of the thirteenth, indeed partly of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with all the fantastic monstrosities, now so trivial, pertaining to that style; under which disguises the really antique earnest groundwork, interesting as old Thought, if not as old Poetry, is all but quite obscured from us. But Antiquarian diligence is now busy with the *Heldenbuch* also, from which what light is in it will doubtless be elicited, and here and there a deformity removed. Though the Ethiop cannot change his skin, there is no need that even he should go abroad unwashed.[1]

Casper von Roen, or whoever was the ultimate redactor of the *Heldenbuch*, whom Lessing designates as 'a highly ill-

[1] Our inconsiderable knowledge of the *Heldenbuch* is derived from various secondary sources; chiefly from Lessing's *Werke* (b. xiii.), where the reader will find an epitome of the whole Poem, with Extracts by Herr Fülleborn, from which the above are taken. A still more accessible and larger Abstract, with long specimens translated into verse, stands in the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (pp. 45-167). Von der Hagen has since been employed specially on the *Heldenbuch*; with what result we have not yet learned.

informed man,' would have done better had he quite omitted that little King Laurin, 'and his little Rose-garden,' which properly is no Rose-garden at all; and instead thereof introduced the *Gehörnte Siegfried* (Behorned Siegfried), whose history lies at the heart of the whole Northern Traditions; and, under a rude prose dress, is to this day a real child's-book and people's-book among the Germans. Of this Siegfried we have already seen somewhat in the Rose-garden at Worms; and shall ere long see much more elsewhere; for he is the chief hero of the *Nibelungen*: indeed nowhere can we dip into these old Fictions, whether in Scandinavia or the Rhine-land, but under one figure or another, whether as Dragon-killer and Prince-royal, or as Blacksmith and Horse-subduer, as Sigurd, Sivrit, Siegfried, we are sure to light on him. As his early adventures belong to the strange sort, and will afterwards concern us not a little, we shall here endeavour to piece together some consistent outline of them; so far indeed as that may be possible; for his biographers, agreeing in the main points, differ widely in the details.

First, then, let no one from the title *Gehörnte* (Horned, Behorned), fancy that our brave Siegfried, who was the loveliest as well as the bravest of men, was actually cornuted, and had horns on his brow, though like Michael Angelo's Moses; or even that his skin, to which the epithet *Behorned* refers, was hard like a crocodile's, and not softer than the softest shamoy: for the truth is, his Hornedness means only an Invulnerability, like that of Achilles; which he came by in the following manner. All men agree that Siegfried was a king's son; he was born, as we here have good reason to know, 'at Santen in Netherland,' of Siegemund and the fair Siegelinde; yet by some family misfortune or discord, of which the accounts are very various, he came into singular straits during boyhood; having passed that happy period of life, not under the canopies of costly state, but by the sooty stithy, in one Mimer a Blacksmith's shop. Here, however, he was nowise in his proper element; ever quarrelling with his

fellow-apprentices; nay, as some say, breaking the hardest anvils into shivers by his too stout hammering. So that Mimer, otherwise a first-rate Smith, could by no means do with him there. He sends him, accordingly, to the neighbouring forest, to fetch charcoal; well aware that a monstrous Dragon, one Regin, the Smith's own Brother, would meet him and devour him. But far otherwise it proved; Siegfried by main force slew this Dragon, or rather Dragonised Smith's-Brother; made broth of him; and, warned by some significant phenomena, bathed therein; or, as others assert, bathed directly in the monster's blood, without cookery; and hereby attained that Invulnerability, complete in all respects, save that between his shoulders, where a lime-tree leaf chanced to settle and stick during the process, there was one little spot, a fatal spot as afterwards turned out, left in its natural state.

Siegfried, now seeing through the craft of the Smith, returned home and slew him; then set forth in search of adventures, the bare catalogue of which were long to recite. We mention only two, as subsequently of moment both for him and for us. He is by some said to have courted, and then jilted, the fair and proud Queen Brunhild of Isenland; nay, to have thrown down the seven gates of her Castle; and then ridden off with her wild horse Gana, having mounted him in the meadow, and instantly broken him. Some cross passages between him and Queen Brunhild, who understood no jesting, there must clearly have been, so angry is her recognition of him in the *Nibelungen*; nay, she bears a lasting grudge against him there; as he, and indeed she also, one day too sorely felt.

His other grand adventure is with the two sons of the deceased King Nibelung, in Niebelungen-land: these two youths, to whom their father had bequeathed a Hoard or Treasure, beyond all price or computation, Siegfried, 'riding by alone,' found on the side of a mountain, in a state of great perplexity. They had brought out the Treasure from the cave where it usually lay; but how to part it was the

difficulty; for, not to speak of gold, there were as many jewels alone 'as twelve wagons in four days and nights, each going three journeys, could carry away'; nay, 'however much you took from it, there was no diminution'; besides, in real property, a Sword, Balmung, of great potency; a Divining-rod, 'which gave power over every one'; and a *Tarnkappe* (or Cloak of Darkness), which not only rendered the wearer invisible, but also gave him twelve men's strength. So that the two Princes Royal, without counsel save from their Twelve stupid Giants, knew not how to fall upon any amicable arrangement; and, seeing Siegfried ride by so opportunely, requested him to be arbiter; offering also the Sword Balmung for his trouble. Siegfried, who readily undertook the impossible problem, did his best to accomplish it; but, of course, without effect; nay, the two Nibelungen Princes, being of choleric temper, grew impatient, and provoked him; whereupon, with the Sword Balmung he slew them both, and their Twelve Giants (perhaps originally Signs of the Zodiac) to boot. Thus did the famous *Nibelungen Hort* (Hoard), and indeed the whole Nibelungen-land, come into his possession: wearing the Sword Balmung, and having slain the two Princes and their Champions, what was there farther to oppose him? Vainly did the Dwarf Alberich, our old friend Elberich of the *Heldenbuch*, who had now become special keeper of this Hoard, attempt some resistance with a Dwarf Army; he was driven back into the cave; plundered of his *Tarnkappe*; and obliged, with all his myrmidons, to swear fealty to the conqueror, whom indeed thenceforth he and they punctually obeyed.

Whereby Siegfried might now farther style himself King of the Nibelungen; master of the infinite Nibelungen Hoard (collected doubtless by art-magic in the beginning of Time, in the deep bowels of the Universe), with the *Wünschelruthe* (Wishing or Divining-rod) pertaining thereto; owner of the *Tarnkappe*, which he ever after kept by him, to put on at will; and though last not least, Bearer and Wielder of the Sword

Balmung,[1] by the keen edge of which all this gain had come to him. To which last acquisitions adding his previously acquired Invulnerability, and his natural dignities as Prince of Netherland, he might well show himself before the foremost at Worms or elsewhere; and attempt any the highest adventure that fortune could cut out for him. However, his subsequent history belongs all to the *Nibelungen Song*; at which fair garden of poesy we are now, through all these shaggy wildernesses and enchanted woods, finally arrived.

Apart from its antiquarian value, and not only as by far the finest monument of old German art; but intrinsically, and as a mere detached composition, this *Nibelungen* has an excellence that cannot but surprise us. With little preparation, any reader of poetry, even in these days, might find it

[1] By this Sword Balmung also hangs a tale. Doubtless it was one of those invaluable weapons sometimes fabricated by the old Northern Smiths, compared with which our modern Foxes and Ferraras and Toledos are mere leaden tools. Von der Hagen seems to think it simply the Sword Mimung under another name; in which case Siegfried's old master, Mimer, had been the maker of it, and called it after himself, as if it had been his son. In Scandinavian chronicles, veridical or not, we have the following account of that transaction. Mimer (or, as some have it, surely without ground, one Velint, once an apprentice of his) was challenged by another Craftsman, named Amilias, who boasted that he had made a suit of armour which no stroke could dint,—to equal that feat, or own himself the second Smith then extant. This last the stout Mimer would in no case do, but proceeded to forge the Sword Mimung; with which, when it was finished, he, 'in presence of the King,' cut asunder 'a thread of wool floating on water.' This would have seemed a fair fire-edge to most smiths: not so to Mimer; he sawed the blade in pieces, welded it in 'a red-hot fire for three days,' tempered it 'with milk and oatmeal,' and by much other cunning brought out a sword that severed 'a ball of wool floating on water.' But neither would this suffice him; he returned to his smithy, and by means known only to himself, produced, in the course of seven weeks, a third and final edition of Mimung, which split asunder a whole floating pack of wool. The comparative trial now took place forthwith. Amilias, cased in his impenetrable coat of mail, sat down on a bench, in presence of assembled thousands, and bade Mimer strike him. Mimer fetched of course his best blow, on which Amilias observed, that there was a strange feeling of cold iron in his inwards. "Shake thyself," said Mimer; the luckless wight did so, and fell in two halves, being cleft sheer through from collar to haunch, never more to swing hammer in this world. See *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 31.

interesting. It is not without a certain Unity of interest and purport, an internal coherence and completeness; it is a Whole, and some spirit of Music informs it: these are the highest characteristics of a true Poem. Considering farther what intellectual environment we now find it in, it is doubly to be prized and wondered at; for it differs from those *Herobooks*, as molten or carved metal does from rude agglomerated ore; almost as some Shakspeare from his fellow-Dramatists, whose *Tamburlaines* and *Island Princesses*, themselves not destitute of merit, first show us clearly in what pure loftiness and loneliness the *Hamlets* and *Tempests* reign.

The unknown Singer of the *Nibelungen*, though no Shakspeare, must have had a deep poetic soul; wherein things discontinuous and inanimate shaped themselves together into life, and the Universe with its wondrous purport stood significantly imaged; overarching, as with heavenly firmaments and eternal harmonies, the little scene where men strut and fret their hour. His Poem, unlike so many old and new pretenders to that name, has a basis and organic structure, a beginning, middle and end; there is one great principle and idea set forth in it, round which all its multifarious parts combine in living union. Remarkable it is, moreover, how along with this essence and primary condition of all poetic virtue, the minor external virtues of what we call Taste and so forth, are, as it were, presupposed; and the living soul of Poetry being there, its body of incidents, its garment of language, come of their own accord. So too in the case of Shakspeare: his feeling of propriety, as compared with that of the Marlowes and Fletchers, his quick sure sense of what is fit and unfit, either in act or word, might astonish us, had he no other superiority. But true Inspiration, as it may well do, includes that same Taste, or rather a far higher and heartfelt Taste, of which that other 'elegant' species is but an ineffectual, irrational apery: let us see the herald Mercury actually descend from his Heaven, and the bright wings, and the graceful movement of these, will not be wanting.

With an instinctive art, far different from acquired artifice, this Poet of the *Nibelungen*, working in the same province with his contemporaries of the *Heldenbuch*, on the same material of tradition, has, in a wonderful degree, possessed himself of what these could only strive after; and with his 'clear feeling of fictitious truth,' avoided as false the errors and monstrous perplexities in which they vainly struggled. He is of another species than they; in language, in purity and depth of feeling, in fineness of invention, stands quite apart from them.

The language of the *Heldenbuch*, as we saw above, was a feeble half-articulate child's-speech, the metre nothing better than a miserable doggerel; whereas here in the old Frankish (*Oberdeutsch*) dialect of the *Nibelungen*, we have a clear decisive utterance, and in a real system of verse, not without essential regularity, great liveliness, and now and then even harmony of rhythm. Doubtless we must often call it a diffuse diluted utterance; at the same time it is genuine, with a certain antique garrulous heartiness; and has a rhythm in the thoughts as well as the words. The simplicity is never silly: even in that perpetual recurrence of epithets, sometimes of rhymes, as where two words, for instance *lip* (body, life, *leib*) and *wip* (woman, wife, *weib*) are indissolubly wedded together, and the one never shows itself without the other following,—there is something which reminds us not so much of poverty, as of trustfulness and childlike innocence. Indeed a strange charm lies in those old tones, where, in gay dancing melodies, the sternest tidings are sung to us; and deep floods of Sadness and Strife play lightly in little curling billows, like seas in summer. It is as a meek smile, in whose still, thoughtful depths a whole infinitude of patience, and love, and heroic strength lie revealed. But in other cases too, we have seen this outward sport and inward earnestness offer grateful contrast, and cunning excitement; for example, in Tasso; of whom, though otherwise different enough, this old Northern Singer has more than once reminded us. There

too, as here, we have a dark solemn meaning in light guise; deeds of high temper, harsh self-denial, daring and death, stand embodied in that soft, quick-flowing, joyfully modulated verse. Nay, farther, as if the implement, much more than we might fancy, had influenced the work done, these two Poems, could we trust our individual feeling, have in one respect the same poetical result for us: in the *Nibelungen* as in the *Gerusalemme*, the persons and their story are indeed brought vividly before us, yet not near and palpably present; it is rather as if we looked on that scene through an inverted telescope, whereby the whole was carried far away into the distance, the life-large figures compressed into brilliant miniatures, so clear, so real, yet tiny, elf-like and beautified as well as lessened, their colours being now closer and brighter, the shadows and trivial features no longer visible. This, as we partly apprehend, comes of *singing* Epic Poems; most part of which only pretend to be sung. Tasso's rich melody still lives among the Italian people; the *Nibelungen* also is what it professes to be, a *Song*.

No less striking than the verse and language is the quality of the invention manifested here. Of the Fable, or narrative material of the *Nibelungen* we should say that it had high, almost the highest merit; so daintily yet firmly is it put together; with such felicitous selection of the beautiful, the essential, and no less felicitous rejection of whatever was unbeautiful or even extraneous. The reader is no longer afflicted with that chaotic brood of Fire-drakes, Giants, and malicious turbaned Turks, so fatally rife in the *Heldenbuch*: all this is swept away, or only hovers in faint shadows afar off; and free field is open for legitimate perennial interests. Yet neither is the *Nibelungen* without its wonders; for it is poetry and not prose; here too, a supernatural world encompasses the natural, and, though at rare intervals and in calm manner, reveals itself there. It is truly wonderful, with what skill our simple untaught Poet deals with the marvellous; admitting it without reluctance or criticism, yet precisely in

the degree and shape that will best avail him. Here, if in no other respect, we should say that he has a decided superiority to Homer himself. The whole story of the *Nibelungen* is fateful, mysterious, guided on by unseen influences; yet the actual marvels are few, and done in the far distance; those Dwarfs, and Cloaks of Darkness, and charmed Treasure-caves, are heard of rather than beheld, the tidings of them seem to issue from unknown space. Vain were it to inquire where that Nibelungen-land specially is: its very name is *Nebel-land* or *Nifl-land*, the land of Darkness, of Invisibility. The 'Nibelungen Heroes' that muster in thousands and tens of thousands, though they march to the Rhine or Danube, and we see their strong limbs and shining armour, we could almost fancy to be children of the air. Far beyond the firm horizon, that wonder-bearing region swims on the infinite waters; unseen by bodily eye, or at most discerned as a faint streak, hanging in the blue depths, uncertain whether island or cloud. And thus the *Nibelungen Song*, though based on the bottomless foundations of Spirit, and not unvisited of skyey messengers, is a real, rounded, habitable Earth, where we find firm footing, and the wondrous and the common live amicably together. Perhaps it would be difficult to find any Poet of ancient or modern times, who in this trying problem has steered his way with greater delicacy and success.

To any of our readers who may have personally studied the *Nibelungen*, these high praises of ours will not seem exaggerated: the rest, who are the vast majority, must endeavour to accept them with some degree of faith, at least of curiosity; to vindicate, and judicially substantiate them would far exceed our present opportunities. Nay, in any case, the criticism, the alleged Characteristics of a Poem are so many Theorems, which are indeed enunciated, truly or falsely, but the Demonstration of which must be sought for in the reader's own study and experience. Nearly all that can be attempted here, is some hasty epitome of the mere Narrative; no substantial image of the work, but a feeble outline and shadow. To which

task, as the personages and their environment have already been in some degree illustrated, we can now proceed without obstacle.

The *Nibelungen* has been called the Northern Epos; yet it has, in great part, a Dramatic character: those thirty-nine *Aventiuren* (Adventures), which it consists of, might be so many scenes in a Tragedy. The catastrophe is dimly prophesied from the beginning; and, at every fresh step, rises more and more clearly into view. A shadow of coming Fate, as it were, a low inarticulate voice of Doom falls, from the first, out of that charmed Nibelungen-land: the discord of two women is as a little spark of evil passion, which ere long enlarges itself into a crime; foul murder is done; and now the Sin rolls on like a devouring fire, till the guilty and the innocent are alike encircled with it, and a whole land is ashes, and a whole race is swept away.

Uns ist in alten mæren Wunders vil geseit,
Von helden lobebæren Von grozer chuonheit;
Von vrouden und' hoch-geziten, Von weinen und von chlagen,
Von chuner rechen striten, Muget ir nu wunder horen sagen.

We find in ancient story Wonders many told,
Of heroes in great glory With spirit free and bold;
Of joyances and high-tides, Of weeping and of woe,
Of noble Recken striving, Mote ye now wonders know.

This is the brief artless Proem; and the promise contained in it proceeds directly towards fulfilment. In the very second stanza we learn:

Es wühs in Burgonden Ein vil edel magedin,
Das in allen landen Niht schoners mohte sin;
Chriemhilt was si geheien, Si wart ein schone wip;
Darumbe müsen degene Vil verliesen den lip.

A right noble maiden Did grow in Burgundy,
That in all lands of earth Nought fairer mote there be;
Chriemhild of Worms she hight, She was a fairest *wife*;
For the which must warriors A many lose their life.[1]

[1] This is the first of a thousand instances in which the two inseparables, *wip* and *lip*, or in modern tongue *weib* and *leib*, as mentioned above, appear together.

Chriemhild, this world's-wonder, a king's daughter and king's sister, and no less coy and proud than fair, dreams one night that 'she had petted a falcon, strong, beautiful and wild; which two eagles snatched away from her: this she was forced to see; greater sorrow felt she never in the world.' Her mother, Ute, to whom she relates the vision, soon redes it for her; the falcon is a noble husband, whom, God keep him, she must suddenly lose. Chriemhild declares warmly for the single state; as, indeed, living there at the Court of Worms, with her brothers, Gunther, Gernot, Geiselher, 'three kings noble and rich,' in such pomp and renown, the pride of Burgunden-land and Earth, she might readily enough have changed for the worse. However, dame Ute bids her not be too emphatical; for 'if ever she have heartfelt joy in life, it will be from man's love, and she shall be a fair wife (*wip*), when God sends her a right worthy Ritter's *lip*.' Chriemhild is more in earnest than maidens usually are when they talk thus; it appears, she guarded against love, 'for many a lief-long day'; nevertheless, she too must yield to destiny. 'Honourably she was to become a most noble Ritter's wife.' 'This,' adds the old Singer, 'was that same falcon she dreamed of: how sorely she since revenged him on her nearest kindred! For that one death died full many a mother's son.'

It may be observed, that the Poet here, and at all times, shows a marked partiality for Chriemhild; ever striving, unlike his fellow-singers, to magnify her worth, her faithfulness and loveliness; and softening, as much as may be, whatever makes against her. No less a favourite with him is

From these two opening stanzas of the *Nibelungen Lied*, in its purest form, the reader may obtain some idea of the versification; it runs on in more or less regular Alexandrines, with a cæsural pause in each, where the capital letter occurs; indeed, the lines seem originally to have been divided into two at that point, for sometimes, as in Stanza First, the middle words (*mæren*, *lobebæren*; *geziten*, *striten*) also rhyme; but this is rather a rare case. The word *rechen* or *recken*, used in the First Stanza, is the constant designation for bold fighters, and has the same root with *rich* (thus in old French, *hommes riches*; in Spanish, *ricos hombres*), which last is here also synonymous with *powerful*, and is applied to kings, and even to the Almighty, *Got dem richen*.

Siegfried, the prompt, gay, peaceably fearless hero; to whom, in the Second *Aventiure*, we are here suddenly introduced, at Santen (Xanten), the Court of Netherland; whither, to his glad parents, after achievements (to us partially known) 'of which one might sing and tell forever,' that noble prince has returned. Much as he has done and conquered, he is but just arrived at man's years: it is on occasion of this joyful event that a high-tide (*hochgezit*) is now held there, with infinite joustings, minstrelsy, largesses and other chivalrous doings, all which is sung with utmost heartiness. The old King Siegemund offers to resign his crown to him; but Siegfried has other game a-field: the unparalleled beauty of Chriemhild has reached his ear and his fancy; and now he will to Worms and woo her, at least 'see how it stands with her.' Fruitless is it for Siegemund and the mother Siegelinde to represent the perils of that enterprise, the pride of those Burgundian Gunthers and Gernots, the fierce temper of their uncle Hagen; Siegfried is as obstinate as young men are in these cases, and can hear no counsel. Nay, he will not accept the much more liberal proposition, to take an army with him, and conquer the country, if it must be so; he will ride forth, like himself, with twelve champions only, and so defy the future. Whereupon, the old people finding that there is no other course, proceed to make him clothes;[1]—at least, the good queen with 'her fair women sitting night and day,' and sewing, does so, the father furnishing noblest battle and riding gear;—and so dismiss him with many blessings and lamentations. 'For him wept sore the king and his *wife*, but he comforted both their bodies (*lip*); he said, "Ye must not weep, for my body ever shall ye be without care."'

> Sad was it to the Recken, Stood weeping many a maid;
> I ween their heart had them The tidings true foresaid,
> That of their friends so many Death thereby should find;
> Cause had they of lamenting, Such boding in their mind.

[1] This is a never-failing preparative for all expeditions, and always specified and insisted on with a simple, loving, almost female impressiveness.

Nevertheless, on the seventh morning, that adventurous company 'ride up the sand,' on the Rhinebeach, to Worms; in high temper, in dress and trappings, aspect and bearing more than kingly.

Siegfried's reception at King Gunther's court, and his brave sayings and doings there for some time, we must omit. One fine trait of his chivalrous delicacy it is that, for a whole year, he never hints at his errand; never once sees or speaks of Chriemhild, whom, nevertheless, he is longing day and night to meet. She, on her side, has often through her lattices noticed the gallant stranger, victorious in all tiltings and knightly exercises; whereby it would seem, in spite of her rigorous predeterminations, some kindness for him is already gliding in. Meanwhile, mighty wars and threats of invasion arise, and Siegfried does the state good service. Returning victorious, both as general and soldier, from Hessen (Hessia), where, by help of his own courage and the sword Balmung, he has captured a Danish king, and utterly discomfited a Saxon one; he can now show himself before Chriemhild without other blushes than those of timid love. Nay, the maiden has herself inquired pointedly of the messengers, touching his exploits; and 'her fair face grew rose-red when she heard them.' A gay High-tide, by way of triumph, is appointed; several kings, and two-and-thirty princes, and knights enough with 'gold-red saddles,' come to joust; and better than whole infinities of kings and princes with their saddles, the fair Chriemhild herself, under guidance of her mother, chiefly too in honour of the victor, is to grace that sport. 'Ute the full rich' fails not to set her needle-women to work, and 'clothes of price are taken from their presses,' for the love of her child, 'wherewith to deck many women and maids.' And now, 'on the Whitsun-morning,' all is ready, and glorious as heart could desire it; brave Ritters, 'five thousand or more,' all glancing in the lists; but grander still, Chriemhild herself is advancing beside her mother, with a hundred body-guards, all sword-in-hand,

and many a noble maid 'wearing rich raiment,' in her train!

'Now issued forth the lovely one (*minnechliche*), as the red morning doth from troubled clouds; much care fled away from him who bore her in his heart, and long had done; he saw the lovely one stand in her beauty.

'There glanced from her garments full many precious stones, her rose-red colour shone full lovely: try what he might, each man must confess that in this world he had not seen aught so fair.

'Like as the light moon stands before the stars, and its sheen so clear goes over the clouds, even so stood she now before many fair women; whereat cheered was the mind of the hero.

'The rich chamberlains you saw go before her, the high-spirited Recken would not forbear, but pressed on where they saw the lovely maiden. Siegfried the lord was both glad and sad.

'He thought in his mind, How could this be that I should woo thee? That was a foolish dream; yet must I forever be a stranger, I were rather (*sanfter*, softer) dead. He became, from these thoughts, in quick changes, pale and red.

'Thus stood so lovely the child of Siegelinde, as if he were limned on parchment by a master's art; for all granted that hero so beautiful they had never seen.'

In this passage, which we have rendered, from the Fifth *Aventiure*, into the closest prose, it is to be remarked, among other singularities, that there are two similes: in which figure of speech our old Singer deals very sparingly. The first, that comparison of Chriemhild to the moon among stars with its sheen going over the clouds, has now for many centuries had little novelty or merit: but the second, that of Siegfried to a Figure in some illuminated Manuscript, is graceful in itself; and unspeakably so to antiquaries, seldom honoured, in their Black-letter stubbing and grubbing, with such a poetic windfall!

A prince and a princess of this quality are clearly made for one another. Nay, on the motion of young Herr Gernot, fair Chriemhild is bid specially to salute Siegfried, she who had never before saluted man; which unparalleled grace the lovely one, in all courtliness, openly does him. "Be

welcome," said she, "Herr Siegfried, a noble Ritter good"; from which salute, for this seems to have been all, 'much raised was his mind.' He bowed with graceful reverence, as his manner was with women; she took him by the hand, and with fond stolen glances they looked at each other. Whether in that ceremonial joining of hands there might not be some soft, slight pressure, of far deeper import, is what our Singer will not take upon him to say; however, he thinks the affirmative more probable. Henceforth, in that bright May weather, the two were seen constantly together: nothing but felicity around and before them.—In these days, truly, it must have been that the famous Prize-fight, with Dietrich of Bern and his Eleven Lombardy champions, took place, little to the profit of the two Lovers; were it not rather that the whole of that Rose-garden transaction, as given in the *Heldenbuch*, might be falsified and even imaginary; for no mention or hint of it occurs here. War or battle is not heard of; Siegfried the peerless walks wooingly by the side of Chriemhild the peerless; matters, it is evident, are in the best possible course.

But now comes a new side-wind, which, however, in the long-run also forwards the voyage. Tidings, namely, reached over the Rhine, not so surprising we might hope, 'that there was many a fair maiden'; whereupon Gunther the King 'thought with himself to win one of them.' It was an honest purpose in King Gunther, only his choice was not the discreetest. For no fair maiden will content him but Queen Brunhild, a lady who rules in *Isenland*, far over sea, famed indeed for her beauty, yet no less so for her caprices. Fables we have met with of this Brunhild being properly a *Valkyr*, or Scandinavian Houri, such as were wont to lead old northern warriors from their last battle-field into Valhalla; and that her castle of *Isenstein* stood amidst a lake of fire: but this, as we said, is fable and groundless calumny, of which there is not so much as notice taken here. Brunhild, it is plain enough, was a flesh-and-blood maiden, glorious in

look and faculty, only with some preternatural talents given her, and the strangest wayward habits. It appears, for example, that any suitor proposing for her has this brief condition to proceed upon: he must try the adorable in the three several games of hurling the Spear (at one another), Leaping, and throwing the Stone: if victorious, he gains her hand; if vanquished, he loses his own head; which latter issue, such is the fair Amazon's strength, frequent fatal experiment has shown to be the only probable one.

Siegfried, who knows something of Brunhild and her ways, votes clearly against the whole enterprise; however, Gunther has once for all got the whim in him, and must see it out. The prudent Hagen von Troneg, uncle to love-sick Gunther, and ever true to him, then advises that Siegfried be requested to take part in the adventure; to which request Siegfried readily accedes on one condition: that, should they prove fortunate, he himself is to have Chriemhild to wife when they return. This readily settled, he now takes charge of the business, and throws a little light on it for the others. They must lead no army thither; only two, Hagen and Dankwart, besides the king and himself, shall go. The grand subject of *waete*[1] (clothes) is next hinted at, and in general terms elucidated; whereupon a solemn consultation with Chriemhild ensues; and a great cutting-out, on her part, of white silk from Araby, of green silk from Zazemang, of strange fish-skins covered with morocco silk; a great sewing thereof for seven weeks, on the part of her maids; lastly, a fitting-on of the three suits by each hero, for each had three; and heartiest thanks in return, seeing all fitted perfectly, and was of grace and price unutterable. What is still more to the point, Siegfried takes his Cloak of Darkness with him, fancying he may need it there. The good old Singer, who has hitherto alluded only in the faintest way to Siegfried's prior adventures and miraculous possessions, introduces this

[1] Hence our English *weeds*, and Scotch *wad* (pledge); and, say the etymologists, *wadding*, and even *wedding*.

of the *Tarnkappe* with great frankness and simplicity. 'Of wild dwarfs (*getwergen*),' says he, 'I have heard tell, they are in hollow mountains, and for defence wear somewhat called *Tarnkappe*, of wondrous sort'; the qualities of which garment, that it renders invisible, and gives twelve men's strength, are already known to us.

The voyage to Isenstein, Siegfried steering the ship thither, is happily accomplished in twenty days. Gunther admires to a high degree the fine masonry of the place; as indeed he well might, there being some eighty-six towers, three immense palaces and one immense hall, the whole built of 'marble green as grass'; farther he sees many fair women looking from the windows down on the bark, and thinks the loveliest is she in the snow-white dress; which, Siegfried informs him, is a worthy choice; the snow-white maiden being no other than Brunhild. It is also to be kept in mind that Siegfried, for reasons known best to himself, had previously stipulated that, though a free king, they should all treat him as vassal of Gunther, for whom accordingly he holds the stirrup, as they mount on the beach; thereby giving rise to a misconception, which in the end led to saddest consequences.

Queen Brunhild, who had called back her maidens from the windows, being a strict disciplinarian, and retired into the interior of her green marble Isenstein, to dress still better, now inquires of some attendant, Who these strangers of such lordly aspect are, and what brings them? The attendant professes himself at a loss to say; one of them looks like Siegfried, the other is evidently by his port a noble king. His notice of Von Troneg Hagen is peculiarly vivid:

> The third of those companions He is of aspect stern,
> And yet with lovely body, Rich queen, as ye might discern,
> From those *his rapid glances,* For the eyes nought rest in him,
> Meseems this foreign Recke Is of temper fierce and grim.

This is one of those little graphic touches, scattered all over our Poem, which do more for picturing out an object,

especially a man, than whole pages of enumeration and mensuration. Never after do we hear of this stout indomitable Hagen, in all the wild deeds and sufferings he passes through, but those *swinden blicken* of his come before us, with the restless, deep, dauntless spirit that looks through them.

Brunhild's reception of Siegfried is not without tartness; which, however, he, with polished courtesy and the nimblest address, ever at his command, softens down, or hurries over: he is here, without will of his own, and so forth, only as attendant on his master, the renowned King Gunther, who comes to sue for her hand, as the summit and keystone of all earthly blessings. Brunhild, who had determined on fighting Siegfried himself, if so he willed it, makes small account of this King Gunther or his prowess; and instantly clears the ground, and equips her for battle. The royal wooer must have looked a little blank when he saw a shield brought in for his fair one's handling, 'three spans thick with gold and iron,' which four chamberlains could hardly bear, and a spear or javelin she meant to shoot or hurl, which was a burden for three. Hagen, in angry apprehension for his king and nephew, exclaims that they shall all lose their life (*lip*), and that she is the *tiuvels wip*, or Devil's wife. Nevertheless Siegfried is already there in his Cloak of Darkness, twelve men strong, and privily whispers in the ear of royalty to be of comfort; takes the shield to himself, Gunther only affecting to hold it, and so fronts the edge of battle. Brunhild performs prodigies of spear-hurling, of leaping, and stone-pitching; but Gunther, or rather Siegfried, 'who does the work, he only acting the gestures,' nay, who even snatches him up into the air, and leaps carrying him,—gains a decided victory, and the lovely Amazon must own with surprise and shame that she is fairly won. Siegfried presently appears without *Tarnkappe*, and asks with a grave face, When the games, then, are to begin?

So far well; yet somewhat still remains to be done. Brunhild will not sail for Worms, to be wedded, till she have

assembled a fit train of warriors; wherein the Burgundians, being here without retinue, see symptoms or possibilities of mischief. The deft Siegfried, ablest of men, again knows a resource. In his *Tarnkappe* he steps on board the bark, which, seen from the shore, appears to drift-off of its own accord; and therein, stoutly steering towards *Nibelungenland*, he reaches that mysterious country and the mountain where his Hoard lies, before the second morning; finds Dwarf Alberich and all his giant sentinels at their post, and faithful almost to the death; these soon rouse him thirty thousand Nibelungen Recken, from whom he has only to choose one thousand of the best; equip them splendidly enough; and therewith return to Gunther, simply as if they were that sovereign's own bodyguard, that had been delayed a little by stress of weather.

The final arrival at Worms; the bridal feasts, for there are two, Siegfried also receiving his reward; and the joyance and splendour of man and maid, at this lordliest of high-tides; and the joustings, greater than those at Aspramont or Montauban,—every reader can fancy for himself. Remarkable only is the evil eye with which Queen Brunhild still continues to regard the noble Siegfried. She cannot understand how Gunther, the Landlord of the Rhine,[1] should have bestowed his sister on a vassal: the assurance that Siegfried also is a prince and heir-apparent, the prince namely of Netherland, and little inferior to Burgundian majesty itself, yields no complete satisfaction; and Brunhild hints plainly that, unless the truth be told her, unpleasant consequences may follow. Thus is there ever a ravelled thread in the web of life! But for this little cloud of spleen, these bridal feasts had been all bright and balmy as the month of June. Unluckily too, the cloud is an electric one; spreads itself in time into a general earthquake; nay, that very night becomes

[1] *Der Wirt von Rine:* singular enough, the word *Wirth*, often applied to royalty in that old dialect, is now also the title of innkeepers. To such base uses may we come.

a thunder-storm, or tornado, unparalleled we may hope in the annals of connubial happiness.

The Singer of the *Nibelungen*, unlike the author of *Roderick Random*, cares little for intermeddling with 'the chaste mysteries of Hymen.' Could we, in the corrupt ambiguous modern tongue, hope to exhibit any shadow of the old simple, true-hearted, merely historical spirit, with which, in perfect purity of soul, he describes things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,—we could a tale unfold! Suffice it to say, King Gunther, Landlord of the Rhine, falling sheer down from the third heaven of hope, finds his spouse the most athletic and intractable of women; and himself, at the close of the adventure, nowise encircled in her arms, but tied hard and fast, hand and foot, in her girdle, and hung thereby, at considerable elevation, on a nail in the wall. Let any reader of sensibility figure the emotions of the royal breast, there as he vibrates suspended on his peg, and his inexorable bride sleeping sound in her bed below! Towards morning he capitulates; engaging to observe the prescribed line of conduct with utmost strictness, so he may but avoid becoming a laughing-stock to all men.

No wonder the dread king looked rather grave next morning, and received the congratulations of mankind in a cold manner. He confesses to Siegfried, who partly suspects how it may be, that he has brought the 'evil devil' home to his house in the shape of wife, whereby he is wretched enough. However, there are remedies for all things but death. The ever-serviceable Siegfried undertakes even here to make the crooked straight. What may not an honest friend with Tarnkappe and twelve men's strength perform? Proud Brunhild, next night, after a fierce contest, owns herself again vanquished; Gunther is there to reap the fruits of another's victory; the noble Siegfried withdraws, taking nothing with him but the luxury of doing good, and the proud queen's Ring and Girdle gained from her in that struggle; which small trophies he, with the last infirmity of a noble mind,

presents to his own fond wife, little dreaming that they would one day cost him and her, and all of them, so dear. Such readers as take any interest in poor Gunther will be gratified to learn, that from this hour Brunhild's preternatural faculties quite left her, being all dependent on her maidhood; so that any more spear-hurling, or other the like extraordinary work, is not to be apprehended from her.

If we add, that Siegfried formally made over to his dear Chriemhild the Nibelungen Hoard, by way of *Morgengabe* (or, as we may say, Jointure); and the high-tide, though not the honeymoon being past, returned to Netherland with his spouse, to be welcomed there with infinite rejoicings,—we have gone through as it were the First Act of this Tragedy; and may here pause to look round us for a moment. The main characters are now introduced on the scene, the relations that bind them together are dimly sketched out: there is the prompt, cheerfully heroic, invulnerable and invincible Siegfried, now happiest of men; the high Chriemhild, fitly-mated, and if a moon, revolving glorious round her sun, or *Friedel* (joy and darling); not without pride and female aspirings, yet not prouder than one so gifted and placed is pardonable for being. On the other hand, we have King Gunther, or rather let us say king's-mantle Gunther, for never except in that one enterprise of courting Brunhild, in which too, without help, he would have cut so poor a figure, does the worthy sovereign show will of his own, or character other than that of good potter's clay; farther, the suspicious, forecasting, yet stout and reckless Hagen, him with the *rapid glances*, and these turned not too kindly on Siegfried, whose prowess he has used yet dreads, whose Nibelungen Hoard he perhaps already covets; lastly, the rigorous and vigorous Brunhild, of whom also more is to be feared than hoped. Considering the fierce nature of these now mingled ingredients; and how, except perhaps in the case of Gunther, there is no menstruum of placid stupidity to soften them; except in Siegfried, no element of heroic truth to master them and

bind them together,—unquiet fermentation may readily be apprehended.

Meanwhile, for a season all is peace and sunshine. Siegfried reigns in Netherland, of which his father has surrendered him the crown; Chriemhild brings him a son, whom in honour of the uncle he christens Gunther, which courtesy the uncle and Brunhild repay in kind. The Nibelungen Hoard is still open and inexhaustible; Dwarf Alberich and all the Recken there still loyal; outward relations friendly, internal supremely prosperous: these are halcyon days. But, alas, they cannot last. Queen Brunhild, retaining with true female tenacity her first notion, right or wrong, reflects one day that Siegfried, who is and shall be nothing but her husband's vassal, has for a long while paid him no service; and, determined on a remedy, manages that Siegfried and his queen shall be invited to a high-tide at Worms, where opportunity may chance for enforcing that claim. Thither accordingly, after ten years' absence, we find these illustrious guests returning; Siegfried escorted by a thousand Nibelungen Ritters, and farther by his father Siegemund who leads a train of Netherlanders. Here for eleven days, amid infinite joustings, there is a true heaven-on-earth: but the apple of discord is already lying in the knightly ring, and two Women, the proudest and keenest-tempered of the world, simultaneously stoop to lift it. *Aventiure* Fourteenth is entitled 'How the two queens rated one another.' Never was courtlier Billingsgate uttered, or which came more directly home to the business and bosoms of women. The subject is that old story of Precedence, which indeed, from the time of Cain and Abel downwards, has wrought such effusion of blood and bile both among men and women; lying at the bottom of all armaments and battle-fields, whether Blenheims and Waterloos, or only plate-displays, and tongue-and-eye skirmishes, in the circle of domestic Tea: nay, the very animals have it; and horses, were they but the miserablest Shelties and Welsh ponies, will not graze together till it has been ascertained, by clear fight,

who is master of whom, and a proper drawing-room etiquette established.

Brunhild and Chriemhild take to arguing about the merits of their husbands: the latter, fondly expatiating on the pre-eminence of her *Friedel*, how he walks 'like the moon among stars' before all other men, is reminded by her sister that one man at least must be excepted, the mighty King Gunther of Worms, to whom by his own confession long ago at Isenstein, he is vassal and servant. Chriemhild will sooner admit that clay is above sunbeams, than any such proposition; which therefore she, in all politeness, requests of her sister never more to touch upon while she lives. The result may be foreseen: rejoinder follows reply, statement grows assertion; flint-sparks have fallen on the dry flax, which from smoke bursts into conflagration. The two queens part in hottest, though still clear-flaming anger. Not, however, to let their anger burn out, but only to feed it with more solid fuel. Chriemhild dresses her forty maids in finer than royal apparel; orders out all her husband's Recken; and so attended, walks foremost to the Minster, where mass is to be said; thus practically asserting that she is not only a true queen, but the worthier of the two. Brunhild, quite outdone in splendour, and enraged beyond all patience, overtakes her at the door of the Minster, with peremptory order to stop: "before king's wife shall vassal's never go."

Then said the fair Chriemhilde, Right angry was her mood:
"Couldest thou but hold thy peace, It were surely for thy good;
Thyself hast all polluted With shame thy fair bodye;
How can a Concubine By right a King's wife be?"

"Whom hast thou Concubined?" The King's wife quickly spake;
"That do I thee," said Chriemhild; "For thy pride and vaunting's sake;
Who first had thy fair body Was Siegfried my beloved Man;
My Brother it was not That thy maidhood from thee wan."

In proof of which outrageous saying, she produces that Ring and Girdle; the innocent conquest of which, as we well

know, had a far other origin. Brunhild burst into tears; 'sadder day she never saw.' Nay, perhaps a new light now rose on her over much that had been dark in her late history: 'she rued full sore that ever she was born.'

Here, then, is the black injury, which only blood will wash away. The evil fiend has begun his work; and the issue of it lies beyond man's control. Siegfried may protest his innocence of that calumny, and chastise his indiscreet spouse for uttering it even in the heat of anger: the female heart is wounded beyond healing; the old springs of bitterness against this hero unite into a fell flood of hate; while he sees the sunlight, she cannot know a joyful hour. Vengeance is soon offered her: Hagen, who lives only for his prince, undertakes this bad service; by treacherous professions of attachment, and anxiety to guard Siegfried's life, he gains from Chriemhild the secret of his vulnerability; Siegfried is carried out to hunt; and in the hour of frankest gaiety is stabbed through the fatal spot; and, felling the murderer to the ground, dies upbraiding his false kindred, yet, with a touching simplicity, recommending his child and wife to their protection. '"Let her feel that she is your sister; was there ever virtue in princes, be true to her: for me my Father and my men shall long wait." The flowers all around were wetted with blood, then he struggled with death; not long did he this, the weapon cut him too keen; so he could speak nought more, the Recke bold and noble.'

At this point, we might say, ends the Third Act of our Tragedy; the whole story henceforth takes a darker character; it is as if a tone of sorrow and fateful boding became more and more audible in its free light music. Evil has produced new evil in fatal augmentation: injury is abolished; but in its stead there is guilt and despair. Chriemhild, an hour ago so rich, is now robbed of all: her grief is boundless as her love has been. No glad thought can ever more dwell in her; darkness, utter night has come over her, as she looked into the red of morning. The spoiler too walks

abroad unpunished; the bleeding corpse witnesses against Hagen, nay, he himself cares not to hide the deed. But who is there to avenge the friendless? Siegfried's Father has returned in haste to his own land; Chriemhild is now alone on the earth, her husband's grave is all that remains to her; there only can she sit, as if waiting at the threshold of her own dark home; and in prayers and tears pour out the sorrow and love that have no end. Still farther injuries are heaped on her: by advice of the crafty Hagen, Gunther, who had not planned the murder, yet permitted and witnessed it, now comes with whining professions of repentance and good-will; persuades her to send for the Nibelungen Hoard to Worms; where no sooner is it arrived, than Hagen and the rest forcibly take it from her; and her last trust in affection or truth from mortal is rudely cut away. Bent to the earth, she weeps only for her lost Siegfried, knows no comfort, but will weep forever.

One lurid gleam of hope, after long years of darkness, breaks in on her, in the prospect of revenge. King Etzel sends from his far country to solicit her hand: the embassy she hears at first, as a woman of ice might do; the good Rudiger, Etzel's spokesman, pleads in vain that his king is the richest of all earthly kings; that he is so lonely 'since Frau Helke died'; that though a heathen, he has Christians about him, and may one day be converted: till at length, when he hints distantly at the power of Etzel to avenge her injuries, she on a sudden becomes all attention. Hagen, foreseeing such possibilities, protests against the match; but is overruled: Chriemhild departs with Rudiger for the land of the Huns; taking cold leave of her relations; only two of whom, her brothers Gernot and Giselher, innocent of that murder, does she admit near her as convoy to the Donau.

The Nibelungen Hoard has hitherto been fatal to all its possessors; to the two sons of Nibelung; to Siegfried its conqueror: neither does the Burgundian Royal House fare better with it. Already, discords threatening to arise, Hagen

sees prudent to sink it in the Rhine; first taking oath of Gunther and his brothers, that none of them shall reveal the hiding-place, while any of the rest is alive. But the curse that clave to it could not be sunk there. The Nibelungen-land is now theirs: they themselves are henceforth called Nibelungen; and this history of their fate is the Nibelungen Song, or *Nibelungen Noth* (Nibelungen's Need, extreme Need, or final wreck and abolition).

The Fifth Act of our strange eventful history now draws on. Chriemhild has a kind husband, of hospitable disposition, who troubles himself little about her secret feelings and intents. With his permission, she sends two minstrels, inviting the Burgundian Court to a high-tide at Etzel's: she has charged the messengers to say that she is happy, and to bring all Gunther's champions with them. Her eye was on Hagen, but she could not single him from the rest. After seven days' deliberation, Gunther answers that he will come. Hagen has loudly dissuaded the journey, but again been overruled. 'It is his fate,' says a commentator, 'like Cassandra's, ever to foresee the evil, and ever to be disregarded. He himself shut his ear against the inward voice; and now his warnings are uttered to the deaf.' He argues long, but in vain: nay, young Gernot hints at last that this aversion originates in personal fear:

> Then spake Von Troneg Hagen: "Nowise is it through fear;
> So you command it, Heroes, Then up, gird on your gear;
> I ride with you the foremost Into King Etzel's land."
> Since then full many a helm Was shivered by his hand.

Frau Ute's dreams and omens are now unavailing with him: "whoso heedeth dreams," said Hagen, "of the right story wotteth not": he has computed the worst issue, and defied it.

Many a little touch of pathos, and even solemn beauty lies carelessly scattered in these rhymes, had we space to exhibit such here. As specimen of a strange, winding, diffuse, yet

innocently graceful style of narrative, we had translated some considerable portion of this Twenty-fifth *Aventiure*, 'How the Nibelungen marched (fared) to the Huns,' into verses as literal as might be; which now, alas, look mournfully different from the original; almost like Scriblerus's shield when the barbarian housemaid had scoured it! Nevertheless, to do for the reader what we can, let somewhat of that modernised ware, such as it is, be set before him. The brave Nibelungen are on the eve of departure; and about ferrying over the Rhine: and here it may be noted that Worms,[1] with our old Singer, lies not in its true position, but at some distance from

[1] This City of Worms, had we a right imagination, ought to be as venerable to us Moderns, as any Thebes or Troy was to the Ancients. Whether founded by the Gods or not, it is of quite unknown antiquity, and has witnessed the most wonderful things. Within authentic times, the Romans were here; and if tradition may be credited, Attila also; it was the seat of the Austrasian kings; the frequent residence of Charlemagne himself; innumerable Festivals, High-tides, Tournaments, and Imperial Diets were held in it, of which latter, one at least, that where Luther appeared in 1521, will be forever remembered by all mankind. Nor is Worms more famous in history than, as indeed we may see here, it is in romance; whereof many monuments and vestiges remain to *this day*. 'A pleasant meadow there,' says Von der Hagen, 'is still called Chriemhild's *Rosengarten*. The name *Worms* itself is derived (by Legendary Etymology) from the Dragon, or *Worm*, which Siegfried slew, the figure of which once formed the City Arms; in past times, there was also to be seen here an ancient strong *Riesen Haus* (Giant's-house), and many a memorial of Siegfried: his Lance, 66 feet long (almost 80 English feet), in the Cathedral; his Statue, of gigantic size, on the *Neue Thurm* (New Tower) on the Rhine'; etc. etc. 'And lastly the Siegfried's Chapel, in primeval, Pre-Gothic Architecture, not long since pulled down. In the time of the *Meistersängers* too, the Stadtrath was bound to give every master, who sang the lay of Siegfried (*Meisterlied von Siegfrieden*, the purport of which is now unknown), without mistake, a certain gratuity.' *Glossary to the Nibelungen*, § *Worms*.

One is sorry to learn that this famed Imperial City is no longer Imperial, but much fallen in every way from its palmy state; the 30,000 inhabitants to be found there in Gustavus Adolphus' time, having now declined into some 6800, —'who maintain themselves by wine-growing, Rhine-boats, tobacco-manufacture, and making sugar-of-lead.' So hard has war, which respects nothing, pressed on Worms, ill-placed for safety, on the hostile border: Louvois, or Louis XIV., in 1689, had it utterly devastated; whereby in the interior, 'spaces that were once covered with buildings are now gardens.' See *Conv. Lexicon*, § *Worms*.

the river; a proof at least that he was never there, and probably sang and lived in some very distant region:

The boats were floating ready, And many men there were;
What clothes of price they had They took and stow'd them there,
Was never a rest from toiling Until the eventide,
Then they took the flood right gaily, Would longer not abide.

Brave tents and hutches You saw raised on the grass,
Other side the Rhine-stream That camp it pitched was:
The king to stay a while Was besought of his fair wife;
That night she saw him with her, And never more in life.

Trumpets and flutes spoke out, At dawning of the day,
That time was come for parting, So they rose to march away:
Who loved-one had in arms Did kiss that same, I ween;
And fond farewells were bidden By cause of Etzel's Queen.

Frau Ute's noble sons They had a serving-man,
A brave one and a true: Or ever the march began,
He speaketh to King Gunther, What for his ear was fit,
He said: "Woe for this journey, I grieve because of it."

He, Rumold hight, the Sewer, Was known as hero true;
He spake: "Whom shall this people And land be trusted to?
Woe on 't will nought persuade ye, Brave Recken, from this road!
Frau Chriemhild's flattering message No good doth seem to bode."

"The land to thee be trusted, And my fair boy also,
And serve thou well the women, I tell thee ere I go;
Whomso thou findest weeping Her heart give comfort to;
No harm to one of us King Etzel's wife will do."

The steeds were standing ready, For the Kings and for their men;
With kisses tenderest Took leave full many then,
Who, in gallant cheer and hope, To march were nought afraid:
Them since that day bewaileth Many a noble wife and maid.

But when the rapid Recken Took horse and prickt away,
The women shent in sorrow You saw behind them stay;
Of parting all too long Their hearts to them did tell;
When grief so great is coming, The mind forebodes not well.

Nathless the brisk Burgonden All on their way did go,
Then rose the country over A mickle dole and woe;
On both sides of the hills Woman and man did weep.
Let their folk do how they list, These gay their course did keep.

The Nibelungen Recken[1] Did march with them as well,
In a thousand glittering hauberks, Who at home had ta'en farewell
Of many a fair woman Should see them never more:
The wound of her brave Siegfried Did grieve Chriemhilde sore.

Then 'gan they shape their journey Towards the River Maine,
All on through East Franconia, King Gunther and his train;
Hagen he was their leader, Of old did know the way;
Dankwart did keep, as marshal, Their ranks in good array.

As they, from East Franconia, The Salfield rode along,
Might you have seen them prancing, A bright and lordly throng,
The Princes and their vassals, All heroes of great fame:
The twelfth morn brave King Gunther Unto the Donau came.

There rode Von Troneg Hagen, The foremost of that host,
He was to the Nibelungen The guide they lov'd the most:
The Ritter keen dismounted, Set foot on the sandy ground,
His steed to a tree he tied, Looked wistful all around.

"Much scaith," Von Troneg said, "May lightly chance to thee,
King Gunther, by this tide, As thou with eyes mayst see:
The river is overflowing, Full strong runs here its stream,
For crossing of this Donau Some counsel might well beseem."

"What counsel hast thou, brave Hagen," King Gunther then did say,
"Of thy own wit and cunning? Dishearten me not, I pray:
Thyself the ford wilt find us, If knightly skill it can,
That safe to yonder shore We may pass both horse and man."

"To me, I trow," spake Hagen, "Life hath not grown so cheap,
To go with will and drown me In riding these waters deep;
But first, of men some few By this hand of mine shall die,
In great King Etzel's country, As best good-will have I.

But bide ye here by the River, Ye Ritters brisk and sound,
Myself will seek some boatman, If boatman here be found,
To row us at his ferry, Across to Gelfrat's land:"
The Troneger grasped his buckler, Fared forth along the strand.

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[1] These are the Nibelungen proper who had come to Worms with Siegfried, on the famed bridal journey from Isenstein, long ago. Observe, at the same time, that ever since the *Nibelungen Hoard* was transferred to Rhineland, the whole subjects of King Gunther are often called Nibelungen, and their subsequent history is this *Nibelungen Song*.

He was full bravely harness'd, Himself he knightly bore,
With buckler and with helmet, Which bright enough he wore:
And, bound above his hauberk, A weapon broad was seen,
That cut with both its edges, Was never sword so keen.

Then hither he and thither Search'd for the Ferryman,
He heard a splashing of waters, To watch the same he 'gan,
It was the white Mer-women, That in a fountain clear,
To cool their fair bodyes, Were merrily bathing here.

From these Mer-women, who 'skimmed aloof like white cygnets' at sight of him, Hagen snatches up 'their wondrous raiment'; on condition of returning which, they rede him his fortune; how this expedition is to speed. At first favourably·

She said: "To Etzel's country Of a truth ye well may hie,
For here I pledge my hand, Now kill me if I lie,
That heroes seeking honour Did never arrive thereat
So richly as ye shall do, Believe thou surely that."

But no sooner is the wondrous raiment restored them than they change their tale; for in spite of that matchless honour, it appears every one of the adventurous Recken is to perish.

Outspake the wild Mer-woman: "I tell thee it will arrive,
Of all your gallant host No man shall be left alive,
Except King Gunther's chaplain, As we full well do know;
He only, home returning, To the Rhine-land back shall go."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen, His wrath did fiercely swell:
"Such tidings to my master I were right loath to tell,
That in King Etzel's country We all must lose our life:
Yet show me over the water, Thou wise all-knowing *wife*."

Thereupon, seeing him bent on ruin, she gives directions how to find the ferry, but withal counsels him to deal warily; the ferry-house stands on the other side of the river; the boatman, too, is not only the hottest-tempered of men, but rich and indolent; nevertheless, if nothing else will serve, let Hagen call himself Amelrich, and that name will bring him. All happens as predicted: the boatman, heedless of all shout-

ing and offers of gold clasps, bestirs him lustily at the name of Amelrich; but the more indignant is he, on taking-in his fare, to find it a counterfeit. He orders Hagen, if he loves his life, to leap out.

"Now say not that," spake Hagen; "Right hard am I bested,
Take from me for good friendship This clasp of gold so red;
And row our thousand heroes And steeds across this river."
Then spake the wrathful boatman, "That will I surely never."

Then one of his oars he lifted, Right broad it was and long,
He struck it down on Hagen, Did the hero mickle wrong,
That in the boat he staggered, And alighted on his knee;
Other such wrathful boatman Did never the Troneger see.

His proud unbidden guest He would now provoke still more,
He struck his head so stoutly that it broke in twain the oar,
With strokes on head of Hagen; He was a sturdy wight:
Nathless had Gelfrat's boatman Small profit of that fight.

With fiercely-raging spirit The Troneger turn'd him round,
Clutch'd quick enough his scabbard, And a weapon there he found;
He smote his head from off him, And cast it on the sand,
Thus had that wrathful boatman His death from Hagen's hand.

Even as Von Troneg Hagen The wrathful boatman slew,
The boat whirl'd round to the river, He had work enough to do;
Or ever he turn'd it shorewards, To weary he began,
But kept full stoutly rowing. The bold King Gunther's man.

He wheel'd it back, brave Hagen, With many a lusty stroke,
The strong oar, with such rowing, In his hand asunder broke;
He fain would reach the Recken, All waiting on the shore,
No tackle now he had; Hei,[1] how deftly he spliced the oar,

With thong from off his buckler! It was a slender band;
Right over against a forest He drove the boat to land;
Where Gunther's Recken waited, In crowds along the beach;
Full many a goodly hero Moved down his boat to reach.

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[1] These apparently insignificant circumstances, down even to mending the oar from his shield, are preserved with a singular fidelity in the most distorted editions of the Tale: see, for example, the Danish ballad, *Lady Grimhild's Wrack* (translated in the *Northern Antiquities*, p. 275, by Mr. Jamieson). This '*Hei!*' is a brisk interjection, whereby the worthy old Singer now and then introduces his own person, when anything very eminent is going forward.

Hagen ferries them over himself 'into the unknown land, like a right yare steersman; yet ever brooding fiercely on that prediction of the wild Mer-woman, which had outdone even his own dark forebodings. Seeing the Chaplain, who alone of them all was to return, standing in the boat beside his *chappelsoume* (pyxes and other sacred furniture), he determines to belie at least this part of the prophecy, and on a sudden hurls the chaplain overboard. Nay, as the poor priest swims after the boat, he pushes him down, regardless of all remonstrance, resolved that he shall die. Nevertheless it proved not so: the chaplain made for the other side; when his strength failed, 'then God's hand helped him,' and at length he reached the shore. Thus does the stern truth stand revealed to Hagen, by the very means he took for eluding it: 'he thought with himself these Recken must all lose their lives.' From this time, a grim reckless spirit takes possession of him; a courage, an audacity, waxing more and more into the fixed strength of desperation. The passage once finished, he dashes the boat in pieces, and casts it in the stream, greatly as the others wonder at him.

"Why do ye this, good brother?" Said the Ritter Dankwart then;
"How shall we cross this river, When the road we come again?
Returning home from Hunland, Here must we lingering stay?"—
Not then did Hagen tell him That return no more could they.

In this shipment 'into the unknown land,' there lies, for the more penetrating sort of commentators, some hidden meaning and allusion. The destruction of the unreturning Ship, as of the Ship Argo, of Æneas's Ships, and the like, is a constant feature of such traditions: it is thought, this ferrying of the Nibelungen has a reference to old Scandinavian Mythuses; nay, to the oldest, most universal emblems shaped out by man's Imagination; Hagen the ferryman being, in some sort, a type of Death, who ferries over his thousands and tens of thousands into a Land still more unknown.[1]

But leaving these considerations, let us remark the deep

[1] See Von der Hagen's *Nibelungen, ihre Bedeutung*, etc.

fearful interest which, in gathering strength, rises to a really tragical height in the close of this Poem. Strangely has the old Singer, in these his loose melodies, modulated the wild narrative into a poetic whole, with what we might call true art, were it not rather an instinct of genius still more unerring. A fateful gloom now hangs over the fortunes of the Nibelungen, which deepens and deepens as they march onwards to the judgment-bar, till all are engulfed in utter night.

Hagen himself rises in tragic greatness; so helpful, so prompt and strong is he, and true to the death, though without hope. If sin can ever be pardoned, then that one act of his is pardonable; by loyal faith, by free daring and heroic constancy, he has made amends for it. Well does he know what is coming; yet he goes forth to meet it, offers to Ruin his sullen welcome. Warnings thicken on him, which he treats lightly, as things now superfluous. Spite of our love for Siegfried, we must pity and almost respect the lost Hagen now in his extreme need, and fronting it so nobly. 'Mixed was his hair with a grey colour, his limbs strong, and threatening his look.' Nay, his sterner qualities are beautifully tempered by another feeling, of which till now we understood not that he was capable,—the feeling of friendship. There is a certain Volker of Alsace here introduced, not for the first time, yet first in decided energy, who is more to Hagen than a brother. This Volker, a courtier and noble, is also a *Spielmann* (minstrel), a *Fidelere gut* (fiddler good); and surely the prince of all *Fideleres*; in truth a very phœnix, melodious as the soft nightingale, yet strong as the royal eagle: for also in the brunt of battle he can play tunes; and with a *Steel Fiddlebow* beats strange music from the cleft helmets of his enemies. There is, in this continual allusion to Volker's *Schwert-fidelbogen* (Sword-fiddlebow), as rude as it sounds to us, a barbaric greatness and depth; the light minstrel of kingly and queenly halls is gay also in the storm of Fate, its dire rushing pipes and whistles to him: is he not

the image of every brave man fighting with Necessity, be that duel when and where it may; smiting the fiend with giant strokes, yet every stroke *musical*?—This Volker and Hagen are united inseparably, and defy death together. 'Whatever Volker said pleased Hagen; whatever Hagen did pleased Volker.'

But into these last Ten *Aventiures*, almost like the image of a Doomsday, we must hardly glance at present. Seldom, perhaps, in the poetry of that or any other age, has a grander scene of pity and terror been exhibited than here, could we look into it clearly. At every new step new shapes of fear arise. Dietrich of Bern meets the Nibelungen on their way, with ominous warnings: but warnings, as we said, are now superfluous, when the evil itself is apparent and inevitable. Chriemhild, wasted and exasperated here into a frightful Medea, openly threatens Hagen, but is openly defied by him; he and Volker retire to a seat before her palace, and sit there, while she advances in angry tears, with a crowd of armed Huns, to destroy them. But Hagen has Siegfried's Balmung lying naked on his knee, the Minstrel also has drawn his keen Fiddlebow, and the Huns dare not provoke the battle. Chriemhild would fain single out Hagen for vengeance; but Hagen, like other men, stands not alone; and sin is an infection which will not rest with one victim. Partakers or not of his crime, the others also must share his punishment. Singularly touching, in the mean while, is King Etzel's ignorance of what every one else understands too well; and how, in peaceful hospitable spirit, he exerts himself to testify his joy over these royal guests of his, who are bidden hither for far other ends. That night the wayworn Nibelungen are sumptuously lodged; yet Hagen and Volker see good to keep watch: Volker plays them to sleep: 'under the porch of the house he sat on the stone: bolder fiddler was there never any; when the tones flowed so sweetly, they all gave him thanks. Then sounded his strings till all the house rang; his strength and the art were great; sweeter and sweeter he began to play, till flitted forth from him into sleep full many

a careworn soul.' It was their last lullaby; they were to sleep no more. Armed men appear, but suddenly vanish, in the night; assassins sent by Chriemhild, expecting no sentinel: it is plain that the last hour draws nigh.

In the morning the Nibelungen are for the Minster to hear mass; they are putting on gay raiment; but Hagen tells them a different tale: '"ye must take other garments, Recken; instead of silk shirts hauberks, for rich mantles your good shields: and, beloved masters, moreover squires and men, ye shall full earnestly go to the church, and plain to God the powerful (*Got dem richen*) of your sorrow and utmost need; and know of a surety that death for us is nigh."' In Etzel's Hall, where the Nibelungen appear at the royal feast in complete armour, the Strife, incited by Chriemhild, begins; the first answer to her provocation is from Hagen, who hews off the head of her own and Etzel's son, making it bound into the mother's bosom: 'then began among the Recken a murder grim and great.' Dietrich, with a voice of preternatural power, commands pause; retires with Etzel and Chriemhild; and now the bloody work has free course. We have heard of battles, and massacres, and deadly struggles in siege and storm; but seldom has even the poet's imagination pictured anything so fierce and terrible as this. Host after host, as they enter that huge vaulted Hall, perish in conflict with the doomed Nibelungen; and ever after the terrific uproar, ensues a still more terrific silence. All night and through morning it lasts. They throw the dead from the windows; blood runs like water; the Hall is set fire to, they quench it with blood, their own burning thirst they slake with blood. It is a tumult like the Crack of Doom, a thousand-voiced, wild-stunning hubbub; and, frightful like a Trump of Doom, the *Sword-fiddlebow* of Volker, who guards the door, makes music to that death-dance. Nor are traits of heroism wanting, and thrilling tones of pity and love; as in that act of Rudiger, Etzel's and Chriemhild's champion, who, bound by oath, 'lays his soul in God's hand,' and enters that Golgotha to die fighting against

his friends; yet first changes shields with Hagen, whose own, also given him by Rudiger in a far other hour, had been shattered in the fight. 'When he so lovingly bade give him the shield, there were eyes enough red with hot tears; it was the last gift which Rudiger of Bechelaren gave to any Recke. As grim as Hagen was, and as hard of mind, he wept at this gift which the hero good, so near his last times, had given him; full many a noble Ritter began to weep.'

At last Volker is slain; they are all slain, save only Hagen and Gunther, faint and wounded, yet still unconquered among the bodies of the dead. Dietrich the wary, though strong and invincible, whose Recken too, except old Hildebrand, he now finds are all killed, though he had charged them strictly not to mix in the quarrel, at last arms himself to finish it. He subdues the two wearied Nibelungen, binds them, delivers them to Chriemhild; 'and Herr Dietrich went away with weeping eyes, worthily from the heroes.' These never saw each other more. Chriemhild demands of Hagen, Where the Nibelungen Hoard is? But he answers her, that he has sworn never to disclose it, while any of her brothers live. "I bring it to an end," said the infuriated woman; orders her brother's head to be struck off, and holds it up to Hagen. '"Thou hast it now according to thy will," said Hagen; "of the Hoard knoweth none but God and I; from thee, she-devil (*valendinne*), shall it forever be hid."' She kills him with his own sword, once her husband's; and is herself struck dead by Hildebrand, indignant at the woe she has wrought; King Etzel, there present, not opposing the deed. Whereupon the curtain drops over that wild scene: 'the full highly honoured were lying dead; the people all had sorrow and lamentation; in grief had the king's feast ended, as all love is wont to do:'

Ine chan iu nicht bescheiden Waz sider da geschach,
Wan ritter unde wrovven Weinen man do sach,
Dar-zuo die edeln chnechte Ir lieben vriunde tot:
Da hat das mœre ein ende; Diz ist der Nibelunge not.

I cannot say you now What hath befallen since;
The women all were weeping, And the Ritters and the prince,
Also the noble squires, Their dear friends lying dead:
Here hath the story ending; This is the *Nibelungen's Need.*

We have now finished our slight analysis of this Poem; and hope that readers who are curious in this matter, and ask themselves, What is the *Nibelungen?* may have here found some outlines of an answer, some help towards farther researches of their own. To such readers another question will suggest itself: Whence this singular production comes to us, When and How it originated? On which point also, what little light our investigation has yielded may be summarily given.

The worthy Von der Hagen, who may well understand the *Nibelungen* better than any other man, having rendered it into the modern tongue, and twice edited it in the original, not without collating some eleven manuscripts, and travelling several thousands of miles to make the last edition perfect,—writes a Book some years ago, rather boldly denominated *The Nibelungen, its Meaning for the present and forever*; wherein, not content with any measurable antiquity of centuries, he would fain claim an antiquity beyond all bounds of dated time. Working his way with feeble mine-lamps of etymology and the like, he traces back the rudiments of his beloved *Nibelungen*, 'to which the flower of his whole life has been consecrated,' into the thick darkness of the Scandinavian *Niflheim* and *Muspelheim*, and the Hindoo Cosmogony; connecting it farther (as already in part we have incidentally pointed out) with the Ship Argo, with Jupiter's goatskin Ægis, the fire-creed of Zerdusht, and even with the heavenly Constellations. His reasoning is somewhat abstruse; yet an honest zeal, very considerable learning and intellectual force bring him tolerably through. So much he renders plausible or probable: that in the *Nibelungen*, under more or less defacement, lie fragments, scattered like mysterious Runes, yet still in part decipherable, of the earliest Thoughts of

men; that the fiction of the Nibelungen was at first a religious or philosophical Mythus; and only in later ages, incorporating itself more or less completely with vague traditions of real events, took the form of a story, or mere Narrative of earthly transactions; in which last form, moreover, our actual *Nibelungen Lied* is nowise the original Narrative, but the second, or even the third redaction of one much earlier.

At what particular era the primeval fiction of the *Nibelungen* passed from its Mythological into its Historical shape; and the obscure spiritual elements of it wedded themselves to the obscure remembrances of the Northern Immigrations; and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac became Twelve Champions of Attila's Wife,—there is no fixing with the smallest certainty. It is known from history that Eginhart, the secretary of Charlemagne, compiled, by order of that monarch, a collection of the ancient German Songs; among which, it is fondly believed by antiquaries, this *Nibelungen* (not indeed our actual *Nibelungen Lied*, yet an older one of similar purport), and the main traditions of the *Heldenbuch* connected therewith, may have had honourable place. Unluckily Eginhart's Collection has quite perished, and only his Life of the Great Charles, in which this circumstance stands noted, survives to provoke curiosity. One thing is certain, Fulco Archbishop of Rheims, in the year 885, is introduced as 'citing certain German books,' to enforce some argument of his by instance of 'King Ermerich's crime toward his relations'; which King Ermerich and his crime are at this day part and parcel of the 'Cycle of German Fiction,' and presupposed in the *Nibelungen*.[1] Later notices, of a more decisive sort, occur in abundance. Saxo Grammaticus, who flourished in the twelfth century, relates that about the year 1130, a Saxon Minstrel being sent to Seeland, with a treacherous invitation from one royal Dane to another; and not daring to violate his oath, yet compassionating the victim, sang to him by way of indirect warning 'the Song of

[1] Von der Hagen's *Nibelungen*, Einleitung, § vii.

Chriemhild's Treachery to her Brothers'; that is to say, the latter portion of the Story which we still read at greater length in the existing *Nibelungen Lied*. To which direct evidence, that these traditions were universally known in the twelfth century, nay, had been in some shape committed to writing, as 'German Books,' in the ninth or rather in the eighth,—we have still to add the probability of their being 'ancient songs,' even at that earliest date; all which may perhaps carry us back into the seventh or even sixth century; yet not farther, inasmuch as certain of the poetic personages that figure in them belong historically to the fifth.

Other and more open proof of antiquity lies in the fact, that these Traditions are so universally diffused. There are Danish and Icelandic versions of them, externally more or less altered and distorted, yet substantially real copies, professing indeed to be borrowed from the German; in particular we have the *Niflinga* and the *Wilkina Saga*, composed in the thirteenth century, which still in many ways illustrate the German original. Innumerable other songs and sagas point more remotely in the same direction. Nay, as Von der Hagen informs us, certain rhymed tales, founded on these old adventures, have been recovered from popular recitation, in the Faroe Islands, within these few years.

If we ask now, What lineaments of Fact still exist in these Traditions; what are the Historical events and persons which our primeval Mythuses have here united with, and so strangely metamorphosed? the answer is unsatisfactory enough. The great Northern Immigrations, unspeakably momentous and glorious as they were for the Germans, have well-nigh faded away utterly from all vernacular records. Some traces, nevertheless, some names and dim shadows of occurrences in that grand movement, still linger here; which, in such circumstances, we gather with avidity. There can be no doubt, for example, but this 'Etzel, king of Hunland,' is the Attila of history; several of whose real achievements and relations are faintly yet still recognisably pictured forth in these Poems. Thus

his first queen is named Halke, and in the Scandinavian versions, Herka; which last (Erca) is also the name that Priscus gives her, in the well-known account of his embassy to Attila. Moreover, it is on his second marriage, which had in fact so mysterious and tragical a character, that the whole catastrophe of the *Nibelungen* turns. It is true, the 'Scourge of God' plays but a tame part here; however, his great acts, though all past, are still visible in their fruits: besides, it is on the Northern or German personages that the tradition chiefly dwells.

Taking farther into account the general 'Cycle,' or System of Northern Tradition, whereof this *Nibelungen* is the centre and keystone, there is, as indeed we saw in the *Heldenbuch*, a certain Kaiser Ottnit and a Dietrich of Bern; to whom also it seems unreasonable to deny historical existence. This *Bern* (Verona), as well as the *Rabenschlacht* (Battle of Ravenna), is continually figuring in these fictions; though whether under Ottnit we are to understand Odoacer the vanquished, and under Dietrich of Bern Theodoricus Veronensis, the victor both at Verona and Ravenna, is by no means so indubitable. Chronological difficulties stand much in the way. For our Dietrich of Bern, as we saw in the *Nibelungen*, is represented as one of Etzel's Champions: now Attila died about the year 450; and this Ostrogoth Theodoric did not fight his great Battle at Verona till 489; that of Ravenna, which was followed by a three years' siege, happening next year. So that before Dietrich could become Dietrich *of Bern*, Etzel had been gone almost half a century from the scene. Startled by this anachronism, some commentators have fished out another Theodoric, eighty years prior to him of Verona, and who actually served in Attila's hosts, with a retinue of Goths and Germans; with which new Theodoric, however, the old Ottnit, or Odoacer, of the *Heldenbuch* must, in his turn, part company; whereby the case is no whit mended. Certain it seems, in the mean time, that *Dietrich*, which signifies *Rich in People*, is the same name which in Greek becomes Theodoricus; for

at first (as in Procopius) this very *Theodoricus* is always written Θευδεριχ, which almost exactly corresponds with the German sound. But such are the inconsistencies involved in both hypotheses, that we are forced to conclude one of two things: either that the Singers of those old Lays were little versed in the niceties of History, and unambitious of passing for authorities therein; which seems a remarkably easy conclusion · or else, with Lessing, that they meant some quite other series of persons and transactions, some Kaiser Otto, and his two Anti-Kaisers (in the twelfth century); which, from what has come to light since Lessing's day, seems now an untenable position.

However, as concerns the *Nibelungen*, the most remarkable coincidence, if genuine, remains yet to be mentioned. 'Thwortz,' a Hungarian Chronicler (or perhaps Chronicle), of we know not what authority, relates, 'that Attila left his kingdom to his two sons Chaba and Aladar, the former by a Grecian mother, the latter by Kremheilch (Chriemhild) a German; that Theodoric, one of his followers, sowed dissension between them; and, along with the Teutonic hosts, took part with his half-countryman the younger son; whereupon rose a great slaughter, which lasted for fifteen days, and terminated in the defeat of Chaba (the Greek), and his flight into Asia.'[1] Could we but put faith in this Thwortz, we might fancy that some vague rumour of that Kremheilch Tragedy, swoln by the way, had reached the German ear and imagination; where, gathering round older Ideas and Mythuses, as Matter round its Spirit, the first rude form of *Chriemhilde's Revenge and the Wreck of the Nibelungen* bodied itself forth in Song.

Thus any historical light emitted by these old Fictions is little better than darkness visible; sufficient at most to indicate that great Northern Immigrations, and wars and rumours of war have been; but nowise how and what they have been.

[1] Weber (*Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 39), who cites Görres (*Zeitung für Einsiedler*) as his authority.

Scarcely clearer is the special history of the Fictions themselves; where they were first put together, who have been their successive redactors and new-modellers. Von der Hagen, as we said, supposes that there may have been three several series of such. Two, at all events, are clearly indicated. In their present shape we have internal evidence that none of these poems can be older than the twelfth century; indeed, great part of the *Hero-book* can be proved to be considerably later. With this last it is understood that Wolfram von Eschenbach and Heinrich von Ofterdingen, two singers otherwise noted in that era, were largely concerned; but neither is there any demonstration of this vague belief: while again, in regard to the Author of our actual *Nibelungen*, not so much as a plausible conjecture can be formed.

Some vote for a certain Conrad von Würzburg; others for the above-named Eschenbach and Ofterdingen; others again for Klingsohr of Ungerland, a minstrel who once passed for a magician. Against all and each of which hypotheses there are objections; and for none of them the smallest conclusive evidence. Who this gifted singer may have been, only in so far as his Work itself proves that there was but One, and the style points to the latter half of the twelfth century,—remains altogether dark: the unwearied Von der Hagen himself, after fullest investigation, gives for verdict, 'we know it not.' Considering the high worth of the *Nibelungen*, and how many feeble balladmongers of that *Swabian Era* have transmitted us their names, so total an oblivion, in this infinitely more important case, may seem surprising. But those *Minnelieder* (Love-songs) and Provençal Madrigals were the Court Poetry of that time, and gained honour in high places; while the old National Traditions were common property and plebeian, and to sing them an unrewarded labour.

Whoever he may be, let him have our gratitude, our love. Looking back with a farewell glance, over that wondrous old Tale, with its many-coloured texture 'of joyances and high-tides, of weeping and of woe,' so skilfully yet artlessly knit-up

into a whole, we cannot but repeat that a true epic spirit lives in it; that in many ways it has meaning and charms for us. Not only as the oldest Tradition of Modern Europe, does it possess a high antiquarian interest; but farther, and even in the shape we now see it under, unless the 'Epics of the Son of Fingal' had some sort of authenticity, it is our oldest Poem also; the earliest product of these New Ages, which on its own merits, both in form and essence, can be named Poetical. Considering its chivalrous, romantic tone, it may rank as a piece of literary composition, perhaps considerably higher than the Spanish *Cid*; taking-in its historical significance, and deep ramifications into the remote Time, it ranks indubitably and greatly higher.

It has been called a Northern *Iliad*; but except in the fact that both poems have a narrative character, and both sing 'the destructive rage' of men, the two have scarcely any similarity. The Singer of the *Nibelungen* is a far different person from Homer; far inferior both in culture and in genius. Nothing of the glowing imagery, of the fierce bursting energy, of the mingled fire and gloom, that dwell in the old Greek, makes its appearance here. The German Singer is comparatively a simple nature; has never penetrated deep into life; never 'questioned Fate'; or struggled with fearful mysteries; of all which we find traces in Homer, still more in Shakspeare; but with meek believing submission, has taken the Universe as he found it represented to him; and rejoices with a fine childlike gladness in the mere outward shows of things. He has little power of delineating character; perhaps he had no decisive vision thereof. His persons are superficially distinguished, and not altogether without generic difference; but the portraiture is imperfectly brought out; there lay no true living original within him. He has little Fancy; we find scarcely one or two similitudes in his whole Poem; and these one or two, which moreover are repeated, betoken no special faculty that way. He speaks of the 'moon among stars'; says often, of sparks struck from steel armour in battle, and

so forth, that they were *wie es wehte der Wind*, 'as if the wind were blowing them.' We have mentioned Tasso along with him; yet neither in this case is there any close resemblance; the light playful grace, still more the Italian pomp and sunny luxuriance of Tasso are wanting in the other. His are humble wood-notes wild; no nightingale's, but yet a sweet sky-hidden lark's. In all the rhetorical gifts, to say nothing of rhetorical attainments, we should pronounce him even poor.

Nevertheless, a noble soul he must have been, and furnished with far more essential requisites for Poetry than these are; namely, with the heart and feeling of a Poet. He has a clear eye for the Beautiful and True; all unites itself gracefully and compactly in his imagination: it is strange with what careless felicity he winds his way in that complex Narrative, and, be the subject what it will, comes through it unsullied, and with a smile. His great strength is an unconscious instinctive strength; wherein truly lies his highest merit. The whole spirit of Chivalry, of Love, and heroic Valour, must have lived in him and inspired him. Everywhere he shows a noble Sensibility; the sad accents of parting friends, the lamentings of women, the high daring of men, all that is worthy and lovely prolongs itself in melodious echoes through his heart. A true old Singer, and taught of Nature herself! Neither let us call him an inglorious Milton, since now he is no longer a mute one. What good were it that the four or five Letters composing his Name could be printed, and pronounced, with absolute certainty? All that was mortal in him is gone utterly; of his life, and its environment, as of the bodily tabernacle he dwelt in, the very ashes remain not: like a fair heavenly Apparition, which indeed he *was*, he has melted into air, and only the Voice he uttered, in virtue of its inspired gift, yet lives and will live.

To the Germans this *Nibelungen Song* is naturally an object of no common love; neither if they sometimes overvalue it, and vague antiquarian wonder is more common than

just criticism, should the fault be too heavily visited. After long ages of concealment, they have found it in the remote wilderness, still standing like the trunk of some almost antediluvian oak; nay, with boughs on it still green, after all the wind and weather of twelve hundred years. To many a patriotic feeling, which lingers fondly in solitary places of the Past, it may well be a rallying-point, and 'Lovers' *Trysting-tree*.'

For us also it has its worth. A creation from the old ages, still bright and balmy, if we visit it; and opening into the first History of Europe, of Mankind. Thus all is not oblivion; but on the edge of the abyss that separates the Old world from the New, there hangs a fair Rainbow-land; which also, in curious repetitions of itself (*twice* over, say the critics), as it were in a secondary and even a ternary reflex, sheds some feeble twilight far into the deeps of the primeval Time.

EARLY GERMAN LITERATURE[1]

[1831]

It is not with Herr Soltau's work, and its merits or demerits, that we here purpose to concern ourselves. The old Low-German Apologue was already familiar under many shapes; in versions into Latin, English and all modern tongues: if it now comes before our German friends under a new shape, and they can read it not only in Gottsched's prosaic Prose, and Goethe's poetic Hexameters, but also 'in the metre of the original,' namely, in Doggerel; and this, as would appear, not without comfort, for it is 'the second edition';—doubtless the Germans themselves will look to it, will direct Herr Soltau aright in his praiseworthy labours, and, with all suitable speed, forward him from his second edition into a third. To us strangers the fact is chiefly interesting, as another little memento of the indestructible vitality there is in worth, however rude; and to stranger Reviewers, as it brings that wondrous old Fiction, with so much else that holds of it, once more specifically into view.

The Apologue of *Reynard the Fox* ranks undoubtedly among the most remarkable Books, not only as a German, but, in all senses, as a European one; and yet for us perhaps its extrinsic, historical character is even more noteworthy than its intrinsic. In Literary History it forms, so to speak, the culminating point, or highest manifestation of a Tendency which had ruled the two prior centuries: ever downwards

[1] Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 16.—*Reinecke der Fuchs, übersetzt von D. W. Soltau* (Reynard the Fox, translated by D. W. Soltau), 2d edition, 8vo, Lüneburg, 1830

from the last of the Hohenstauffen Emperors, and the end of their Swabian Era, to the borders of the Reformation, rudiments and fibres of this singular Fable are seen, among innumerable kindred things, fashioning themselves together; and now, after three other centuries of actual existence, it still stands visible and entire, venerable in itself, and the enduring memorial of much that has proved more perishable. Thus, naturally enough, it figures as the representative of a whole group that historically cluster round it; in studying its significance, we study that of a whole intellectual period.

As this section of German Literature closely connects itself with the corresponding section of European Literature, and, indeed, offers an expressive, characteristic epitome thereof, some insight into it, were such easily procurable, might not be without profit. No Literary Historian that we know of, least of all any in England, having looked much in this direction, either as concerned Germany or other countries, whereby a long space of time, once busy enough and full of life, now lies barren and void in men's memories,—we shall here endeavour to present, in such clearness as first attempts may admit, the result of some slight researches of our own in regard to it.

The *Troubadour Period* in general Literature, to which the *Swabian Era* in German answers, has, especially within the last generation, attracted inquiry enough; the French have their Raynouards, we our Webers, the Germans their Haugs, Gräters, Langs, and numerous other Collectors and Translators of *Minnelieder*; among whom Ludwig Tieck, the foremost in far other provinces, has not disdained to take the lead. We shall suppose that this Literary Period is partially known to all readers. Let each recall whatever he has learned or figured regarding it; represent to himself that brave young heyday of Chivalry and Minstrelsy, when a stern Barbarossa, a stern Lion-heart, sang *sirventes*, and with the hand that could wield the sword and sceptre twanged the melodious strings; when knights-errant tilted, and ladies' eyes rained bright influences; and suddenly, as at sunrise, the whole Earth had grown vocal

and musical. Then truly was the time of singing come; for princes and prelates, emperors and squires, the wise and the simple, men, women and children, all sang and rhymed, or delighted in hearing it done. It was a universal noise of Song; as if the Spring of Manhood had arrived, and warblings from every spray, not, indeed, without infinite twitterings also, which, except their gladness, had no music, were bidding it welcome. This was the *Swabian Era*; justly reckoned not only superior to all preceding eras, but properly the First Era of German Literature. Poetry had at length found a home in the life of men; and every pure soul was inspired by it; and in words, or still better, in actions, strove to give it utterance. 'Believers,' says Tieck, 'sang of Faith; Lovers of Love; Knights described knightly actions and battles; and loving, believing knights were their chief audience. The Spring, Beauty, Gaiety, were objects that could never tire; great duels and deeds of arms carried away every hearer, the more surely the stronger they were painted; and as the pillars and dome of the Church encircled the flock, so did Religion, as the Highest, encircle Poetry and Reality; and every heart, in equal love, humbled itself before her.'[1]

Let the reader, we say, fancy all this, and moreover that, as earthly things do, it is all passing away. And now, from this extreme verge of the *Swabian Era*, let us look forward into the inane of the next two centuries, and see whether there also some shadows and dim forms, significant in their kind, may not begin to grow visible. Already, as above indicated, *Reineke de Fos* rises clear in the distance, as the goal of our survey: let us now, restricting ourselves to the German aspects of the matter, examine what may lie between.

Conrad the Fourth, who died in 1254, was the last of the Swabian Emperors; and Conradin his son, grasping too early at a Southern Crown, perished on the scaffold at Naples in 1268; with which stripling, more fortunate in song than in

[1] *Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter*, Vorrede, x.

war, and whose death, or murder, with fourteen years of other cruelty, the *Sicilian Vespers* so frightfully avenged, the imperial line of the Hohenstauffen came to an end. Their House, as we have seen, gives name to a Literary Era; and truly, if dates alone were regarded, we might reckon it much more than a name. For with this change of dynasty, a great change in German Literature begins to indicate itself; the fall of the Hohenstauffen is close followed by the decay of Poetry; as if that fair flowerage and umbrage, which blossomed far and wide round the Swabian Family, had in very deed depended on it for growth and life; and now, the stem being felled, the leaves also were languishing, and soon to wither and drop away. Conradin, as his father and his grandfather had been, was a singer; some lines of his, though he died in his sixteenth year, have even come down to us; but henceforth no crowned poet, except, long afterwards, some few with cheap laurel-crowns, is to be met with: the Gay Science was visibly declining. In such times as now came, the court and the great could no longer patronise it; the polity of the Empire was, by one convulsion after another, all but utterly dismembered; ambitious nobles, a sovereign without power; contention, violence, distress, everywhere prevailing. Richard of Cornwall, who could not so much as keep hold of his sceptre, not to speak of swaying it wisely; or even the brave Rudolf of Hapsburg, who manfully accomplished both these duties, had other work to do than sweet singing. Gay *Wars of the Wartburg* were now changed to stern *Battles of the Marchfeld*; in his leisure hours a good Emperor, instead of twanging harps, has to hammer from his helmet the dints it had got in his working and fighting hours.[1] Amid such rude tumults the Minne-Song could not

[1] It was on this famous plain of the Marchfeld that Ottocar, King of Bohemia, conquered Bela of Hungary, in 1260; and was himself, in 1278, conquered and slain by Rudolf of Hapsburg, at that time much left to his own resources; whose talent for mending helmets, however, is perhaps but a poetical tradition. Curious, moreover: it was here again, after more than five centuries, that the House of Hapsburg received its worst overthrow, and from a new and greater

but change its scene and tone: if, indeed, it continued at all, which, however, it scarcely did; for now, no longer united in courtly choir, it seemed to lose both its sweetness and its force, gradually became mute, or in remote obscure corners lived on, feeble and inaudible, till after several centuries, when under a new title, and with far inferior claims, it again solicits some notice from us.

Doubtless, in this posture of affairs political, the progress of Literature could be little forwarded from without; in some directions, as in that of Court-Poetry, we may admit that it was obstructed or altogether stopped. But why not only Court-Poetry, but Poetry of all sorts should have declined, and as it were gone out, is quite another question; to which, indeed, as men must have their theory on everything, answer has often been attempted, but only with partial success. To most of the German Literary Historians this so ungenial condition of the Court and Government appears enough: by the warlike, altogether practical character of Rudolf, by the imbecile ambition of his successors, by the general prevalence of feuds and lawless disorder, the death of Poetry seems fully accounted for. In which conclusion of theirs, allowing all force to the grounds it rests on, we cannot but perceive that there lurks some fallacy: the fallacy namely, so common in these times, of deducing the inward and spiritual exclusively from the outward and material; of tacitly, perhaps unconsciously, denying all independent force, or even life, to the former, and looking out for the secret of its vicissitudes solely in some circumstance belonging to the latter. Now it cannot be too often repeated, where it continues still unknown or forgotten, that man has a soul as certainly as he has a body; nay, much more certainly; that properly it is the course of his unseen, spiritual life which informs and rules his external visible life, rather than receives rule from it; in which spiritual life, indeed, and not in any outward action or condition

Rudolf, namely, from Napoleon, at Wagram, which lies in the middle of this same Marchfeld.

arising from it, the true secret of his history lies, and is to be sought after, and indefinitely approached. Poetry above all, we should have known long ago, is one of those mysterious things whose origin and developments never can be what we call explained; often it seems to us like the wind, blowing where it lists, coming and departing with little or no regard to any the most cunning theory that has yet been devised of it. Least of all does it seem to depend on court-patronage, the form of government, or any modification of politics or economics, catholic as these influences have now become in our philosophy: it lives in a snow-clad sulphurous Iceland, and not in a sunny wine-growing France; flourishes under an arbitrary Elizabeth, and dies out under a constitutional George; Philip II. has his Cervantes, and in prison; Washington and Jackson have only their Coopers and Browns. Why did Poetry appear so brightly after the Battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis, and quite turn away her face and wings from those of Lexington and Bunker's Hill? We answer, the Greeks were a poetical people, the Americans are not; that is to say, it appeared because it did appear! On the whole, we could desire that one of two things should happen: Either that our theories and genetic histories of Poetry should henceforth cease, and mankind rest satisfied, once for all, with Dr. Cabanis' theory, which seems to be the simplest, that 'Poetry is a product of the smaller intestines,' and must be cultivated medically by the exhibition of castor-oil: Or else that, in future speculations of this kind, we should endeavour to start with some recognition of the fact, once well known, and still in words admitted, that Poetry is Inspiration; has in it a certain spirituality and divinity which no dissecting-knife will discover; arises in the most secret and most sacred region of man's soul, as it were in our Holy of Holies; and as for external things, depends only on such as can operate in that region; among which it will be found that Acts of Parliament, and the state of the Smithfield Markets, nowise play the chief part.

With regard to this change in German Literature especially, it is to be remarked, that the phenomenon was not a German, but a European one; whereby we easily infer so much at least, that the roots of it must have lain deeper than in any change from Hohenstauffen Emperors to Hapsburg ones. For now the Troubadours and Trouvères, as well as the Minnesingers, were sinking into silence; the world seems to have rhymed itself out; those chivalrous roundelays, heroic tales, mythologies, and quaint love-sicknesses, had grown unprofitable to the ear. In fact Chivalry itself was in the wane; and with it that gay melody, like its other pomp. More earnest business, not sportfully, but with harsh endeavour, was now to be done. The graceful minuet-dance of Fancy must give place to the toilsome, thorny pilgrimage of Understanding. Life and its appurtenances and possessions, which had been so admired and besung, now disclosed, the more they came to be investigated, the more contradictions. The Church no longer rose with its pillars, 'like a venerable dome over the united flock'; but, more accurately seen into, was a strait prison, full of unclean creeping things; against which thraldom all better spirits could not but murmur and struggle. Everywhere greatness and littleness seemed so inexplicably blended: Nature, like the Sphinx, her emblem, with her fair woman's face and neck, showed also the claws of a lioness. Now too her Riddle had been propounded; and thousands of subtle, disputatious Schoolmen were striving earnestly to rede it, that they might live, morally live, that the monster might not devour them. These, like strong swimmers, in boundless bottomless vortices of Logic, swam manfully, but could not get to land.

On a better course, yet with the like aim, Physical Science was also unfolding itself. A Roger Bacon, an Albert the Great, are cheering appearances in this era; not blind to the greatness of Nature, yet no longer with poetic reverence of her, but venturing fearlessly into her recesses, and extorting from her many a secret; the first victories of that long

series which is to make man more and more her King. Thus everywhere we have the image of contest, of effort. The spirit of man, which once, in peaceful, loving communion with the Universe, had uttered forth its gladness in Song, now feels hampered and hemmed-in, and struggles vehemently to make itself room. Power is the one thing needful, and that Knowledge which is Power: thus also Intellect becomes the grand faculty, in which all the others are wellnigh absorbed.

Poetry, which has been defined as 'the harmonious unison of Man with Nature,' could not flourish in this temper of the times. The number of poets, or rather versifiers, henceforth greatly diminishes; their style also, and topics, are different and less poetical. Men wish to be practically instructed rather than poetically amused: Poetry itself must assume a preceptorial character, and teach wholesome saws and moral maxims, or it will not be listened to. Singing for the song's sake is now nowhere practised; but in its stead there is everywhere the jar and bustle of argument, investigation, contentious activity. Such throughout the fourteenth century is the general aspect of mind over Europe. In Italy alone is there a splendid exception; the mystic song of Dante, with its stern indignant moral, is followed by the light love-rhymes of Petrarch, the Troubadour of Italy, when this class was extinct elsewhere: the master minds of that country, peculiar in its social and moral condition, still more in its relations to classical Antiquity, pursue a course of their own. But only the master minds; for Italy too has its Dialecticians, and projectors, and reformers; nay, after Petrarch, these take the lead; and there as elsewhere, in their discords and loud assiduous toil, the voice of Poetry dies away.

To search out the causes of this great revolution, which lie not in Politics nor Statistics, would lead us far beyond our depth. Meanwhile let us remark that the change is nowise to be considered as a relapse, or fall from a higher

state of spiritual culture to a lower; but rather, so far as we have objects to compare it with, as a quite natural progress and higher development of culture. In the history of the universal mind, there is a certain analogy to that of the individual. Our first self-consciousness is the first revelation to us of a whole universe, wondrous and altogether good; it is a feeling of joy and new-found strength, of mysterious infinite hope and capability; and in all men, either by word or act, expresses itself poetically. The world without us and within us, beshone by the young light of Love, and all instinct with a divinity, is beautiful and great; it seems for us a boundless happiness that we are privileged to live. This is the season of generous deeds and feelings; which also, on the lips of the gifted, form themselves into musical utterance, and give spoken poetry as well as acted. Nothing is calculated and measured, but all is loved, believed, appropriated. All action is spontaneous, high sentiment a sure imperishable good; and thus the youth stands, like the First Man, in his fair Garden, giving Names to the bright Appearances of this Universe which he has inherited, and rejoicing in it as glorious and divine. Ere long, however, comes a harsher time. Under the first beauty of man's life appears an infinite, earnest rigour: high sentiment will not avail, unless it can continue to be translated into noble action; which problem, in the destiny appointed for man born to toil, is difficult, interminable, capable of only approximate solution. What flowed softly in melodious coherence when seen and sung from a distance, proves rugged and unmanageable when practically handled. The fervid, lyrical gladness of past years gives place to a collected thoughtfulness and energy; nay, often,—so painful, so unexpected are the contradictions everywhere met with,—to gloom, sadness and anger; and not till after long struggles and hard-contested victories is the youth changed into a man.

Without pushing the comparison too far, we may say that in the culture of the European mind, or in Literature which

is the symbol and product of this, a certain similarity of progress is manifested. That tuneful Chivalry, that high cheerful devotion to the Godlike in Heaven, and to Women, its emblems on earth; those Crusades and vernal Love-songs were the heroic doings of the world's youth; to which also a corresponding manhood succeeded. Poetic recognition is followed by scientific examination: the reign of Fancy, with its gay images, and graceful, capricious sports, has ended; and now Understanding which when reunited to Poetry, will one day become Reason and a nobler Poetry, has to do its part. Meantime, while there is no such union, but a more and more widening controversy, prosaic discord and the unmusical sounds of labour and effort are alone audible.

The era of the Troubadours, who in Germany are the Minnesingers, gave place in that country, as in all others, to a period which we might name the Didactic; for Literature now ceased to be a festal melody, and addressing itself rather to the intellect than to the heart, became as it were a school-lesson. Instead of that cheerful, warbling Song of Love and Devotion, wherein nothing was taught, but all was believed and worshipped, we have henceforth only wise Apologues, Fables, Satires, Exhortations and all manner of edifying Moralities. Poetry, indeed, continued still to be the form of composition for all that can be named Literature; except Chroniclers, and others of that genus, valuable not as doers of the work, but as witnesses of the work done, these Teachers all wrote in verse: nevertheless, in general there are few elements of Poetry in their performances; the internal structure has nothing poetical, is a mere business-like prose: in the rhyme alone, at most in the occasional graces of expression, could we discover that it reckoned itself poetical. In fact, we may say that Poetry, in the old sense, had now altogether gone out of sight: instead of our heavenly vesture and Ariel-harp, she had put on earthly weeds, and walked abroad with ferula and horn-book. It was long before this new guise would sit well on her; only in late centuries that

she could fashion it into beauty, and learn to move with it, and mount with it, gracefully as of old.

Looking now more specially to our historical task, if we inquire how far into the subsequent time this Didactic Period extended, no precise answer can well be given. On this side there seem no positive limits to it; with many superficial modifications, the same fundamental element pervades all spiritual efforts of mankind through the following centuries. We may say that it is felt even in the Poetry of our own time; nay, must be felt through all time; inasmuch as Inquiry once awakened cannot fall asleep, or exhaust itself; thus Literature must continue to have a didactic character; and the Poet of these days is he who, not indeed by mechanical but by poetical methods, can instruct us, can more and more evolve for us the mystery of our Life. However, after a certain space, this Didactic Spirit in Literature cannot, as a historical partition and landmark, be available here. At the era of the Reformation, it reaches its acme; and, in singular shape, steps forth on the high places of Public Business, and amid storms and thunder, not without brightness and true fire from Heaven, convulsively renovates the world. This is, as it were, the apotheosis of the Didactic Spirit, where it first attains a really poetical concentration, and stimulates mankind into heroism of word, and of action also. Of the latter, indeed, still more than of the former; for not till a much more recent time, almost till our own time, has Inquiry in some measure again reconciled itself to Belief; and Poetry, though in detached tones, arisen on us as a true musical Wisdom. Thus is the deed, in certain circumstances, readier and greater than the word: Action strikes fiery light from the rocks it has to hew through; Poetry reposes in the skyey splendour which that rough passage has led to. But after Luther's day, this Didactic Tendency again sinks to a lower level; mingles with manifold other tendencies; among which, admitting that it still forms the main stream, it is no longer so preëminent, positive

and universal, as properly to characterise the whole. For minor Periods and subdivisions in Literary History, other more superficial characteristics must, from time to time, be fixed on.

Neither, examining the other limit of this Period, can we say specially where it begins; for, as usual in these things, it begins not at once, but by degrees: Kings' reigns and changes in the form of Government have their day and date; not so changes in the spiritual condition of a people. The Minnesinger Period and the Didactic may be said to commingle, as it were, to overlap each other, for above a century: some writers partially belonging to the latter class occur even prior to the times of Friedrich II.; and a certain echo of the Minne-song had continued down to Manesse's day, under Ludwig the Bavarian.

Thus from the Minnesingers to the Church Reformers we have a wide space of between two and three centuries; in which, of course, it is impossible for us to do more than point out one or two of the leading appearances; a minute survey and exposition being foreign from our object.

Among the Minnesingers themselves, as already hinted, there are not wanting some with an occasionally didactic character: Gottfried of Strasburg, known also as a translator of *Sir Tristrem*, and two other Singers, Reinmar von Zweter and Walter von der Vogelweide, are noted in this respect; the last two especially, for their oblique glances at the Pope and his Monks, the unsound condition of which body could not escape even a Love-minstrel's eye.[1] But perhaps the

[1] Reinmar von Zweter, for example, says once:

Har und bart nach klostersitten gesnitten
Des vind ich gennog,
Ich vinde aber der nit vil dies rehte tragen;
Halb visch halb man ist visch noch man,
Gar visch ist visch, gar man ist man,
Als ich erkennen kan:
Von hofmunchen und von klosterrittern
Kan ich niht gesagen:
Hofmunchen, klosterrittern, diesen beiden
Wolt ich reht ze rehte wol bescheiden,

special step of transition may be still better marked in the works of a rhymer named the *Stricker*, whose province was the epic, or narrative; into which he seems to have introduced this new character in unusual measure. As the *Stricker* still retains some shadow of a place in Literary History, the following notice of him may be borrowed here. Of his personal history, it may be premised, nothing whatever is known; not even why he bears this title; unless it be, as some have fancied, that *Stricker*, which now signifies *Knitter*, in those days meant *Schreiber* (Writer):

'In truth,' says Bouterwek, 'this painstaking man was more a writer than a Poet, yet not altogether without talent in that latter way. Voluminous enough, at least, in his redaction of an older epic work on the *War of Charlemagne with the Saracens in Spain*, the old German original of which is perhaps nothing more than a translation from the Latin or French. Of a Poet in the Stricker's day, when the romantic epos had attained such polish among the Germans, one might have expected that this ancient Fiction, since he was pleased to remodel it, would have served as the material to a new poetic creation; or at least, that he would have breathed into it some new and more poetic spirit. But such a

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Ob sie sich wolten lassen vinden,
Da sie ze rehte solten wesen;
In kloster munche solten genesen.
So suln des hofs sich ritter unterwinden.

Hair and beard cut in the cloister fashion,
Of this I find enough,
But of those that wear it well I find not many;
Half-fish half-man is neither fish nor man,
Whole fish is fish, whole man is man,
As I discover can:
Of court-monks and of cloister-knights
Can I not speak:
Court-monks, cloister-knights, these both
Would I rightly put to rights,
Whether they would let themselves be found
Where they by right should be;
In their cloister monks should flourish,
And knights obey at court.

See also in Flögel (*Geschichte der komischen Litteratur*, b. iii. s. 11), immediately following this Extract, a formidable dinner-course of *Lies*,—boiled lies, roasted lies, lies with saffron, forced-meat lies, and other varieties, arranged by this same artist;—farther (in page 9), a rather gallant onslaught from Walter von der Vogelweide, on the *Babest* (Pope, *Papst*) himself. All this was before the middle of the thirteenth century.

development of these Charlemagne Fables was reserved for the *Italian* Poets. The Stricker has not only left the matter of the old Tale almost unaltered, but has even brought out its unpoetical lineaments in stronger light. The fanatical piety with which it is overloaded probably appeared to him its chief merit. To convert these castaway Heathens, or failing this, to annihilate them, Charlemagne takes the field. Next to him, the hero Roland plays a main part there. Consultations are held, ambassadors negotiate; war breaks out with all its terrors: the Heathen fight stoutly: at length comes the well-known defeat of the Franks at Ronceval or Roncevaux; where, however, the Saracens also lose so many men that their King Marsilies dies of grief. The Narrative is divided into chapters, each chapter again into sections, an epitome of which is always given at the outset. Miracles occur in the story, but for most part only such as tend to evince how God himself inspirited the Christians against the Heathen. Of anything like free, bold flights of imagination there is little to be met with: the higher features of the genuine romantic epos are altogether wanting. In return, it has a certain didactic temper, which, indeed, announces itself even in the Introduction. The latter, it should be added, prepossesses us in the Poet's favour, testifying with what warm interest the noble and great in man's life affected him.'[1]

The *Wälsche Gast* (Italian Guest) of Zirkler or Tirkeler, who professes, truly or not, to be from Friuli, and, as a benevolent stranger, or *Guest*, tells the Germans hard truths somewhat in the spirit of Juvenal; even the famous *Meister Freidank* (Master Freethought), with his wise Book of rhymed Maxims, entitled *Die Bescheidenheit* (Modesty); still more the sagacious *Tyro King of Scots*, quite omitted in history, but who teaches *Friedebrand his Son*, with some discrimination, how to choose a good priest;—all these, with others of still thinner substance, rise before us only as faint shadows, and must not linger in our field of vision. Greatly the most important figure in the earlier part of this era is Hugo von Trimberg, to whom we must now turn; author of various poetico-preceptorial works, one of which, named the *Renner*

[1] Bouterwek, ix. 245. Other versified Narratives by this worthy *Stricker* still exist, but for the most part only in manuscript. Of these the History of *Wilhelm von Blumethal*, a Round-table adventurer, appears to be the principal. The Poem on Charlemagne stands printed in Schiller's *Thesaurus*; its exact date is matter only of conjecture.

(Runner), has long been known not only to antiquarians, but, in some small degree, even to the general reader. Of Hugo's Biography he has himself incidentally communicated somewhat. His surname he derives from Trimberg, his birthplace, a village on the Saale, not far from Würzburg, in Franconia. By profession he appears to have been a Schoolmaster: in the conclusion of his *Renner*, he announces that 'he kept school for forty years at Thürstadt, near Bamberg'; farther, that his Book was finished in 1300, which date he confirms by other local circumstances.

Der dies Buch gedichtet hat,
Vierzig jar vor Babenberg,
Der pflag der schulen zu Thürstat.
Und heiss Hugo von Trymberg.
Es ward follenbracht das ist wahr,
Da tausent und dreyhundert jar
Nach Christus Geburt vergangen waren,
Drithalbs jar gleich vor den jaren
Da die Juden in Franken wurden erschlagen.
Bey der zeit und in den tagen,
Da bischoff Leupolt bischoff was
Zu Babenberg.

Some have supposed that the Schoolmaster dignity, claimed here, refers not to actual wielding of the birch, but to a Mastership and practice of instructing in the art of Poetry, which about this time began to have its scholars and even guild-brethren, as the feeble remnants of Minne-song gradually took the new shape, in which we afterwards see it, of *Meistergesang* (Master-song): but for this hypothesis, so plain are Hugo's own words, there seems little foundation. It is uncertain whether he was a clerical personage, certain enough that he was not a monk: at all events, he must have been a man of reading and knowledge; industrious in study, and superior in literary acquirement to most in that time. By a collateral account, we find that he had gathered a library of two hundred Books, among which were a whole dozen by himself, five in Latin, seven in German; hoping that by

means of these, and the furtherance they would yield in the pedagogic craft, he might live at ease in his old days; in which hope, however, he had been disappointed; seeing, as himself rather feelingly complains, 'no one now cares to study knowledge (*Kunst*), which, nevertheless, deserves honour and favour.' What these twelve Books of Hugo's own writing were, can, for most part, only be conjectured. Of one, entitled the *Sammler* (Collector), he himself makes mention in the *Renner*: he had begun it above thirty years before this latter: but having by ill accident lost great part of his manuscript, abandoned it in anger. Of another work Flögel has discovered the following notice in Johann Wolf: 'About this time (1599) did that virtuous and learned nobleman, Conrad von Liebenstein, present to me a manuscript of Hugo von Trimberg, who flourished about the year 1300. It sets forth the shortcomings of all ranks, and especially complains of the clergy. It is entitled *Reu ins Land* (Repentance to the Land): and now lies with the Lord of Zillhart.'[1] The other ten appear to have vanished even to the last vestige.

Such is the whole sum-total of information which the assiduity of commentators has collected touching worthy Hugo's life and fortunes. Pleasant it were to see him face to face; gladly would we penetrate through that long vista of five hundred years, and peep into his book-presses, his frugal fireside, his noisy mansion with its disobedient urchins, now that it is all grown so silent: but the distance is too far, the intervening medium intercepts our light; only in uncertain, fluctuating dusk will Hugo and his environment appear to us. Nevertheless Hugo, as he had in Nature, has in History an immortal part: as to his inward man, we can still see that he was no mere bookworm, or simple Parson Adams; but of most observant eye; shrewd, inquiring, considerate, who from his Thürstadt school-chair, as from a *sedes exploratoria*, had looked abroad into the world's business, and formed his own theory about many things. A cheerful,

[1] Flögel (iii. 15), who quotes for it *Wolfii Lexicon Memorab.* t. ii. p. 1061.

gentle heart had been given him; a quiet sly humour; light to see beyond the garments and outer hulls of Life into Life itself: the long-necked purse, the threadbare gabardine, the languidly-simmering pot of his pedagogic household establishment were a small matter to him: he was a man to look on these things with a meek smile; to nestle down quietly, as the lark, in the lowest furrow; nay, to mount therefrom singing, and soar above all mere earthly heights. How many potentates and principalities and proud belligerents have evaporated into utter oblivion, while the poor Thürstadt Schoolmaster still holds together!

This *Renner*, which seems to be his final work, probably comprises the essence of all those lost Volumes; and indeed a synopsis of Hugo's whole Philosophy of Life, such as his two hundred Books and long decades of quiet observation and reflection had taught him. Why it has been named the *Renner*, whether by Hugo himself, or by some witty Editor and Transcriber, there are two guesses forthcoming, and no certain reason. One guess is, that this Book was to *run* after the lost Tomes, and make good to mankind the deficiency occasioned by want of them; which happy-thought, hide-bound though it be, might have seemed sprightly enough to Hugo and that age. The second guess is, that our Author, in the same style of easy wit, meant to say, this Book must *hasten* and run out into the world, and do him a good turn quickly, while it was yet time, he being so very old. But leaving this, we may remark, with certainty enough, that what we have left of Hugo was first printed under this title of *Renner*, at Frankfort-on-Mayn, in 1549; and quite incorrectly, being modernised to all lengths, and often without understanding of the sense; the Edition moreover is now rare, and Lessing's project of a new one did not take effect; so that, except in Manuscripts, of which there are many, and in printed Extracts, which also are numerous, the *Renner* is to most readers a sealed book.

In regard to its literary merit opinions seem to be nearly

unanimous. The highest merit, that of poetical unity, or even the lower merit of logical unity, is not ascribed to it by the warmest panegyrist. Apparently this work had been a sort of store-chest, wherein the good Hugo had, from time to time, deposited the fruits of his meditation as they chanced to ripen for him; here a little, and there a little, in all varieties of kind; till the chest being filled, or the fruits nearly exhausted, it was sent forth and published to the world, by the easy process of turning up the bottom.

'No theme,' says Bouterwek, 'leads with certainty to the other: satirical descriptions, proverbs, fables, jests and other narratives, all huddled together at random, to teach us in a poetical way a series of moral lessons. A strained and frosty Allegory opens the work; then follow the Chapters of *Meyden* (Maids); of Wicked Masters; of Pages; of Priests, Monks and Friars, with great minuteness; then of a Young Minx with an Old Man; then of Bad Landlords, and of Robbers. Next come divers Virtues and Vices, all painted out, and judged of. Towards the end there follows a sort of Moral Natural History; Considerations on the dispositions of various Animals; a little Botany and Physiology; then again all manner of didactic Narratives; and finally a Meditation on the Last Day.'

Whereby it would appear clearly, as hinted, that Hugo's *Renner* pursues no straight course; and only through the most labyrinthic mazes, here wandering in deep thickets, or even sinking in moist bogs, there panting over mountain-tops by narrow sheep-tracks; but for most part jigging lightly on sunny greens, accomplishes his wonderful journey.

Nevertheless, as we ourselves can testify, there is a certain charm in the worthy man; his Work, such as it is, seems to flow direct from the heart, in natural, spontaneous abundance; is at once cheerful and earnest; his own simple, honest, mildly decided character is everywhere visible. Besides, Hugo, as we said, is a person of understanding; has looked over many provinces of Life, not without insight; in his quiet, sly way, can speak forth a shrewd word on occasion. There is a genuine though slender vein of Humour in him; nor in his satire does he ever lose temper, but rebukes sport-

fully; not indeed laughing aloud, scarcely even sardonically smiling, yet with a certain subdued roguery and patriarchal knowingness. His fancy too, if not brilliant, is copious almost beyond measure; no end to his crotchets, suppositions, minute specifications. Withal he is original: his maxims, even when professedly borrowed, have passed through the test of his own experience; all carries in it some stamp of his personality. Thus the *Renner*, though in its whole extent perhaps too boundless and planless for ordinary nerves, makes in the fragmentary state no unpleasant reading: that old doggerel is not without significance; often in its straggling, broken, entangled strokes some vivid antique picture is strangely brought out for us.

As a specimen of Hugo's general manner, we select a small portion of his Chapter on *The Maidens*; that passage where he treats of the highest enterprise a maiden can engage in, the choosing of a husband. It will be seen at once that Hugo is no Minnesinger, glozing his fair audience with madrigals and hypocritical gallantry; but a quiet Natural Historian, reporting such facts as he finds, in perfect good nature, it is true, yet not without an under-current of satirical humour. His quaint style of thought, his garrulous minuteness of detail are partly apparent here. The first few lines we may give in the original also; not as they stand in the Frankfort Edition, but as professing to derive themselves from a genuine ancient source:

Kortzyn mut und lange haar
han die meyde sunderbar
dy zu yren jaren kommen synt
dy wal machen yn daz hertze blynt
dy auchgn wysen yn den weg
von den auchyn get eyn steg
tzu dem hertzen nit gar lang
uff deme stege ist vyl mannig gedang
wen sy woln nemen oder nit.[1]

[1] Horn, *Geschichte und Kritik der deutschen Poesie*, s. 44.

Short of sense and long of hair,
Strange enough the maidens are;
Once they to their teens have got,
Such a choosing, this or that:
Eyes they have that ever spy,
From the Eyes a Path doth lie
To the Heart, and is not long,
Hereon travel thoughts a throng,
Which one they will have or not.

'Woe's me,' continues Hugo, 'how often this same is repeated; till they grow all confused how to choose, from so many, whom they have brought in without number. First they bethink them so: This one is short, that one is long; he is courtly and old, the other young and ill-favoured; this is lean, that is bald; here is one fat, there one thin; this is noble, that is weak; he never yet broke a spear: one is white, another black; that other is named Master Hack (*hartz*); this is pale, that again is red; he seldom eateth cheerful bread;'

and so on, through endless other varieties, in new streams of soft-murmuring doggerel, whereon, as on the Path it would represent, do travel thoughts a throng, which one these fair irresolutes will have or not.

Thus, for Hugo, the age of Minstrelsy is gone: not soft Love-ditties, and hymns of Lady-worship, but sceptical criticism, importunate animadversion, not without a shade of mockery, will he indite. The age of Chivalry is gone also. To a Schoolmaster, with empty larder, the pomp of tournaments could never have been specially interesting; but now such passages of arms, how free and gallant soever, appear to him no other than the probable product of delirium. 'God might well laugh, could it be,' says he, 'to see his mannikins live so wondrously on this Earth: two of them will take to fighting, and nowise let it alone; nothing serves but with two long spears they must ride and stick at one another: greatly to their hurt; for when one is by the other skewered through the bowels or through the weasand, he hath small profit thereby. But who forced them to such straits?' The answer is too plain: some modification of Insanity. Nay, so contemptuous is Hugo of all chivalrous

things, that he openly grudges any time spent in reading of them; in Don Quixote's Library he would have made short work:

> How Master Dietrich fought with Ecken,
> And how of old the stalwart Recken
> Were all by women's craft betrayed:
> Such things you oft hear sung and said,
> And wept at, like a case of sorrow;—
> Of our own Sins we'll think tomorrow.

This last is one of Hugo's darker strokes; for commonly, though moral perfection is ever the one thing needful with him, he preaches in a quite cheerful tone; nay, ever and anon, enlivens us with some timely joke. Considerable part, and apparently much the best part, of his work is occupied with satirical Fables, and *Schwänke* (jests, comic tales); of which latter class we have seen some possessing true humour, and the simplicity which is their next merit. These, however, we must wholly omit; and indeed, without farther parleying, here part company with Hugo. We leave him, not without esteem, and a touch of affection, due to one so true-hearted, and, under that old humble guise, so gifted with intellectual talent. Safely enough may be conceded him the dignity of chief moral Poet of his time; nay, perhaps, for his solid character, and modest manly ways, a much higher dignity. Though his Book can no longer be considered, what the Frankfort Editor describes it in his interminable title-page, as a universal *vade-mecum* for mankind, it is still 'so adorned with many fine sayings,' and in itself of so curious a texture, that it seems well worth preserving. A proper Edition of the *Renner* will one day doubtless make its appearance among the Germans. Hugo is farther remarkable as the precursor and prototype of Sebastian Brandt, whose *Narrenschiff* (Ship of Fools) has, with perhaps less merit, had infinitely better fortune than the *Renner*.

Some half century later in date, and no less didactic in

character than Hugo's *Renner*, another Work, still rising visible above the level of those times, demands some notice from us. This is the *Edelstein* (Gem) of Bonerius or Boner, which at one time, to judge by the number of Manuscripts, whereof fourteen are still in existence, must have enjoyed great popularity; and indeed, after long years of oblivion, it has, by recent critics and redactors, been again brought into some circulation. Boner's *Gem* is a collection of a Hundred Fables done into German rhyme; and derives its proud designation not more perhaps from the supposed excellence of the work than from a witty allusion to the title of Fable First, which, in the chief Manuscript, chances to be that well-known one of the Cock scraping for Barleycorns, and finding instead thereof a precious stone (*Edelstein*) or Gem: *Von einem Hanen und dem edelen Steine*; whereupon the author, or some kind friend, remarks in a sort of Prologue:

> *Dies Büchlein mag der Edelstein*
> *Wol heiszen, wand es in treit* (in sich trägt)
> *Bischaft* (Beispiel) *manger kluogheit.*

'This Bookling may well be called the Gem, sith it includes examples of many a prudence;'—which name accordingly, as we see, it bears even to this day.

Boner and his Fables have given rise to much discussion among the Germans: scattered at short distances throughout the last hundred years, there is a series of Selections, Editions, Translations, Critical Disquisitions, some of them in the shape of Academic Program; among the labourers in which enterprise we find such men as Gellert and Lessing. A *Bonerii Gemma*, or Latin version of the work, was published by Oberlin, in 1782; Eschenburg sent forth an Edition in modern German, in 1810; Benecke a reprint of the antique original, in 1816. So that now a faithful duty has been done to Boner; and what with bibliographical inquiries, what with vocabularies, and learned collations of texts, he that runs may read whatever stands written in the *Gem*.

Of these diligent lucubrations, with which we strangers are only in a remote degree concerned, it will be sufficient here to report in few words the main results,—not indeed very difficult to report. First, then, with regard to Boner himself, we have to say that nothing whatever has been discovered: who, when, or what that worthy moralist was, remains, and may always remain, entirely uncertain. It is merely conjectured, from the dialect, and other more minute indications, that his place of abode was the north-west quarter of Switzerland; with still higher probability, that he lived about the middle of the fourteenth century; from his learning and devout pacific temper, some have inferred that he was a monk or priest; however, in one Manuscript of his *Gem*, he is designated, apparently by some ignorant Transcriber, a knight, *ein Ritter gotz alsus*: from all which, as above said, our only conclusion is, that nothing can be concluded.

Johann Scherz, about the year 1710, in what he called *Philosophiæ moralis Germanorum medii ævi Specimen*, sent forth certain of these Fables, with expositions, but apparently without naming the Author; to which *Specimen*, Gellert in his *Dissertatio de Poesi Apologorum* had again, some forty years afterwards, invited attention. Nevertheless, so total was the obscurity which Boner had fallen into, that Bodmer, already known as the resuscitator of the *Nibelungen Lied*, in printing the *Edelstein* from an old Manuscript, in 1752, mistook its probable date by about a century, and gave his work the title of *Fables from the Minnesinger Period*,[1] without naming the Fabulist, or guessing whether there were one or many. In this condition stood the matter, when several years afterwards, Lessing, pursuing another inquiry, came across the track of this Boner; was allured into it; proceeded to clear it; and moving briskly forward, with a sure eye and sharp critical axe, hewed away innumerable entangle-

[1] Koch also, with a strange deviation from his usual accuracy, dates Boner, in one place, 1220; and in another, 'towards the latter half of the fourteenth century.' See his *Compendium*, pp. 28 and 200, vol. i.

ments; and so opened out a free avenue and vista, where strangely, in remote depth of antiquarian woods, the whole ancient Fable-manufactory, with Boner and many others working in it, becomes visible, in all the light which probably will ever be admitted to it. He who has perplexed himself with *Romulus and Rimicius*, and Nevelet's *Anonymus* and *Avianus*, and still more, with the false guidance of their many commentators, will find help and deliverance in this light, thorough-going Inquiry of Lessing's.[1]

Now, therefore, it became apparent: first, that those supposed *Fables from the Minnesinger Period*, of Bodmer, were in truth written by one Boner, in quite another Period; secondly, that Boner was not properly the author of them, but the borrower and free versifier from certain Latin originals; farther, that the real title was *Edelstein*; and strangest of all, that the work had been printed three centuries before Bodmer's time, namely, at Bamberg, in 1461; of which Edition, indeed, a tattered copy, typographically curious, lay, and probably lies, in the Wolfenbüttel Library, where Lessing then waited, and wrote. The other discoveries, touching Boner's personality and locality, are but conjectures, due also to Lessing, and have been stated already.

As to the *Gem* itself, about which there has been such scrambling, we may say, now when it is cleaned and laid out before us, that, though but a small seed-pearl, it has a genuine value. To us Boner is interesting by his antiquity, as the speaking witness of many long-past things; to his contemporaries again he must have been still more interesting as the reporter of so many new things. These Fables of his, then for the first time rendered out of inaccessible Latin[2] into

[1] *Sämmtliche Schriften*, b. viii.

[2] The two originals to whom Lessing has traced all his Fables are *Avianus* and Nevelet's *Anonymus*; concerning which personages the following brief notice by Jördens (*Lexicon*, i. 161) may be inserted here: 'Flavius Avianus (who must not be confounded with another Latin Poet, *Avienus*) lived, as is believed, under the two Antonines in the second century: he has left us forty-two Fables in elegiac measure, the best Editions of which are that by Kannegiesser

German metre, contain no little edifying matter, had we not known it before; our old friends, the Fox with the musical Raven; the Man and Boy taking their Ass to market, and so inadequate to please the public in their method of transporting him; the Bishop that gave his Nephew a Cure of Souls, but durst not trust him with a Basket of Pears; all these and many more figure here. But apart from the material of his Fables, Boner's style and manner has an abiding merit. He is not so much a Translator as a free Imitator: he tells the story in his own way; appends his own moral, and, except that in the latter department he is apt to be a little prolix, acquits himself to high satisfaction. His narrative, in those old limping rhymes, is cunningly enough brought out: artless, lively, graphic, with a spicing of innocent humour, a certain childlike archness, which is the chief merit of a Fable. Such is the German Æsop; a character whom in the north-west district of Switzerland, at that time of day, we should hardly have looked for.

Could we hope that to many of our readers the old rough dialect of Boner would be intelligible, it were easy to vindicate these praises. As matters stand, we can only venture on one translated specimen, which in this shape claims much allowance; the Fable, also, is nowise the best, or perhaps the worst, but simply one of the shortest. For the rest, we have rendered the old doggerel into new, with all possible fidelity:

(Amsterdam, 1731), that by,' etc. etc. With respect to the *Anonymus* again: 'Under this designation is understood the half-barbarous Latin Poet, whose sixty Fables, in elegiac measure, stand in the collection, which Nevelet, under the title *Mythologia Æsopica*, published at Frankfort in 1610, and which directly follow those of Avianus in that work. They are nothing else than versified translations of the Fables written in prose by *Romulus*, a noted Fabulist, whose era cannot be fixed, nor even his name made out to complete satisfaction.'—The reader who wants deeper insight into these matters may consult Lessing, as cited above.

THE FROG AND THE STEER

Of him that striveth after more honour than he should

A Frog with Frogling by his side
Came hopping through the plain, one tide:
There he an Ox at grass did spy,
Much anger'd was the Frog thereby;
He said: "Lord God, what was my sin
Thou madest me so small and thin?
Likewise I have no handsome feature,
And all dishonoured is my nature,
To other creatures far and near,
For instance, this same grazing Steer."
The Frog would fain with Bullock cope,
'Gan brisk outblow himself in hope.
Then spake his Frogling: "Father o' me,
It boots not, let thy blowing be;
Thy nature hath forbid this battle,
Thou canst not vie with the black-cattle."
Nathless let be the Frog would not,
Such prideful notion had he got;
Again to blow right sore 'gan he,
And said: "Like Ox could I but be
In size, within this world there were
No Frog so glad, to thee I swear."
The Son spake: "Father, me is woe
Thou shouldst torment thy body so,
I fear thou art to lose thy life;
Come follow me and leave this strife;
Good Father, take advice of me,
And let thy boastful blowing be."
Frog said: "Thou needst not beck and nod,
I will not do't, so help me God;
Big as this Ox is I must turn,
Mine honour now it doth concern."
He blew himself, and burst in twain,
Such of that blowing was his gain.

The like hath oft been seen of such
Who grasp at honour overmuch;
They must with none at all be doing,
But sink full soon and come to ruin.
He that, with wind of Pride accurs'd,
Much puffs himself, will surely burst;

He men miswishes and misjudges,
Inferiors scorns, superiors grudges,
Of all his equals is a hater,
Much griev'd he is at any better;
Wherefore it were a sentence wise
Were his whole body set with Eyes,
Who envy hath, to see so well
What lucky hap each man befell,
That so he fillèd were with fury,
And burst asunder in a hurry;
And so full soon betid him this
Which to the Frog betided is.

Readers to whom such stinted twanging of the true Poetic Lyre, such cheerful fingering, though only of one and its lowest string, has any melody, may find enough of it in Benecke's *Boner*, a reproduction, as above stated, of the original *Edelstein*; which Edition we are authorised to recommend as furnished with all helps for such a study: less adventurous readers may still, from Eschenburg's half-modernised Edition, derive some contentment and insight.

Hugo von Trimberg and Boner, who stand out here as our chief Literary representatives of the Fourteenth Century, could play no such part in their own day, when the great men who shone in the world's eye were Theologians and Jurists, Politicians at the Imperial Diet; at best, Professors in the new Universities; of whom all memory has long since perished. So different is universal from temporary importance, and worth belonging to our manhood from that merely of our station or calling. Nevertheless, as every writer, of any true gifts, is 'citizen both of his time and of his country,' and the more completely the greater his gifts; so in the works of these two secluded individuals the characteristic tendencies and spirit of their age may best be discerned.

Accordingly, in studying their commentators, one fact that cannot but strike us is, the great prevalence and currency which this species of Literature, cultivated by them, had obtained in that era. Of Fable Literature especially, this was the summer-

tide and highest efflorescence. The Latin originals which Boner partly drew from, descending, with manifold transformations and additions, out of classical times, were in the hands of the learned; in the living memories of the people were numerous fragments of primeval Oriental Fable, derived perhaps through Palestine; from which two sources, curiously intermingled, a whole stream of Fables evolved itself; whereat the morally athirst, such was the genius of that time, were not slow to drink. Boner, as we have seen, worked in a field then zealously cultivated: nay, was not Æsop himself, what we have for Æsop, a contemporary of his; the Greek Monk Planudes and the Swiss Monk Boner might be chanting their Psalter at one and the same hour!

Fable, indeed, may be regarded as the earliest and simplest product of Didactic Poetry, the first attempt of Instruction clothing itself in Fancy: hence the antiquity of Fables, their universal diffusion in the childhood of nations, so that they have become a common property of all: hence also their acceptance and diligent culture among the Germans, among the Europeans, in this the first stage of an era when the whole bent of Literature was Didactic. But the Fourteenth Century was the age of Fable in a still wider sense: it was the age when whatever Poetry there remained took the shape of Apologue and moral Fiction: the higher spirit of Imagination had died away, or withdrawn itself into Religion; the lower and feebler not only took continual counsel of Understanding, but was content to walk in its leading-strings. Now was the time when human life and its relations were looked at with an earnest practical eye; and the moral perplexities that occur there, when man, hemmed-in between the Would and the Should, or the Must, painfully hesitates, or altogether sinks in that collision, were not only set forth in the way of precept, but embodied, for still clearer instruction, in Examples, and edifying Fictions. The Monks themselves, such of them as had any talent, meditated and taught in this fashion: witness that strange *Gesta Romanorum*, still extant, and once

familiar over all Europe;—a Collection of Moral Tales, expressly devised for the use of Preachers, though only the Shakspeares, and in subsequent times, turned it to right purpose.[1] These and the like old *Gests*, with most of which the *Romans* had so little to do, were the staple Literature of that period; cultivated with great assiduity, and so far as mere invention, or compilation, of incident goes, with no little merit; for already almost all the grand destinies, and fundamental ever-recurring entanglements of human life are laid hold of and depicted here; so that, from the first, our modern Novelists and Dramatists could find nothing new under the sun, but everywhere, in contrivance of their Story, saw themselves forestalled. The boundless abundance of Narratives then current, the singular derivations and transmigrations of these, surprise antiquarian commentators: but, indeed, it was in this same century that Boccaccio, refining the gold from that so copious dross, produced his *Decamerone*, which still indicates the same fact in more pleasant fashion, to all readers. That in these universal tendencies of the time the Germans participated and coöperated, Boner's Fables, and Hugo's many Narrations, serious and comic, may, like two specimens from a great multitude, point out to us. The Madrigal had passed into the Apologue; the Heroic Poem, with its supernatural machinery and sentiment, into the Fiction of practical Life: in which latter species a prophetic eye might have discerned the coming *Tom Joneses* and *Wilhelm Meisters*; and with still more astonishment, the *Minerva Presses* of all nations, and this their huge transit-trade in Rags, all lifted from the dunghill, printed on, and returned thither, to the comfort of parties interested.

The Drama, as is well known, had an equally Didactic origin; namely, in those *Mysteries* contrived by the clergy for bringing home religious truth, with new force, to the universal comprehension. That this cunning device had

[1] See an account of this curious Book in Douce's learned and ingenious *Illustrations of Shakspeare*.

already found its way into Germany, we have proof in a document too curious to be omitted here:

'In the year 1322 there was a play shown at Eisenach, which had a tragical enough effect. Markgraf Friedrich of Misnia, Landgraf also of Thuringia, having brought his tedious warfares to a conclusion, and the country beginning now to revive under peace, his subjects were busy repaying themselves for the past distresses by all manner of diversions; to which end, apparently by the Sovereign's order, a dramatic representation of the *Ten Virgins* was schemed, and at Eisenach, in his presence, duly executed. This happened fifteen days after Easter, by indulgence of the Preaching Friars. In the *Chronicon Sampetrinum* stands recorded that the play was enacted in the Beargarden (*in horto ferarum*), by the clergy and their scholars. But now, when it came to pass that the Wise Virgins would give the Foolish no oil, and these latter were shut out from the Bridegroom, they began to weep bitterly, and called on the Saints to intercede for them; who, however, even with Mary at their head, could effect nothing from God; but the Foolish Virgins were all sentenced to damnation. Which things the Landgraf seeing and hearing, he fell into a doubt, and was very angry; and said, "What then is the Christian Faith, if God will not take pity on us, for intercession of Mary and all the Saints?" In this anger he continued five days; and the learned men could hardly enlighten him to understand the Gospel. Thereupon he was struck with apoplexy, and became speechless and powerless; in which sad state he continued bed-rid two years and seven months, and so died, being then fifty-five.'[1]

Surely a serious warning, would they but take it, to Dramatic Critics, not to venture beyond their depth! Had this fiery old Landgraf given up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands, he might have been pleased he knew not why: whereas the meshes of Theology, in which he kicks and struggles, here strangle the life out of him; and the Ten Virgins at Eisenach are more fatal to warlike men than Æschylus's Furies at Athens were to weak women.

Neither were the unlearned People without their Literature, their Narrative Poetry; though how, in an age without printing and bookstalls, it was circulated among them; whether by strolling *Fideleres* (Minstrels), who might recite

[1] Flögel (*Geschichte der komischen Litteratur*, iv. 287), who founds on that old *Chronicon Sampetrinum Erfurtense*, contained in Menke's Collection.

as well as fiddle, or by other methods, we have not learned. However, its existence and abundance in this era is sufficiently evinced by the multitude of *Volksbücher* (People's-Books) which issued from the Press, next century, almost as soon as there was a Press. Several of these, which still languidly survive among the people, or at least the children, of all countries, were of German composition; of most, so strangely had they been sifted and winnowed to and fro, it was impossible to fix the origin. But borrowed or domestic, they nowhere wanted admirers in Germany: the *Patient Helena*, the *Fair Magelone*, *Bluebeard*, *Fortunatus*; these, and afterwards the *Seven Wise Masters*, with other more directly Æsopic ware, to which the introduction of the old Indian stock, or *Book of Wisdom*, translated from John of Capua's Latin,[1] one day formed a rich accession, were in all memories and on all tongues.

Beautiful traits of Imagination and a pure genuine feeling, though under the rudest forms, shine forth in some of these old Tales: for instance, in *Magelone* and *Fortunatus*; which two, indeed, with others of a different stamp, Ludwig Tieck has, with singular talent, ventured, not unsuccessfully, to reproduce in our own time and dialect. A second class distinguish themselves by a homely, honest-hearted Wisdom, full of character and quaint devices; of which class the *Seven Wise Masters*, extracted chiefly from that *Gesta Romanorum* above mentioned, and containing 'proverb-philosophy, anecdotes, fables and jests, the seeds of which, on the fertile German soil, spread luxuriantly through several generations,' is perhaps the best example. Lastly, in a third class, we find in full play that spirit of broad drollery, of rough saturnine Humour, which the Germans claim as a special characteristic; among these, we must not omit to mention the *Schiltbürger*, correspondent to our own *Wise Men of Gotham*; still less, the far-famed *Tyll Eulenspiegel* (Tyll

[1] In 1483, by command of a certain Eberhard, Duke of Würtemberg. What relation this old *Book of Wisdom* bears to our actual *Pilpay* we have not learned.

Owlglass), whose rogueries and waggeries belong, in the fullest sense, to this era.

This last is a true German work; for both the man Tyll Eulenspiegel, and the Book which is his history, were produced there. Nevertheless, Tyll's fame has gone abroad into all lands: this, the Narrative of his exploits, has been published in innumerable editions, even with all manner of learned glosses, and translated into Latin, English, French, Dutch, Polish; nay, in several languages, as in his own, an *Eulenspiegelerei*, an *Espièglerie*, or dog's-trick, so named after him, still, by consent of lexicographers, keeps his memory alive. We may say, that to few mortals has it been granted to earn such a place in Universal History as Tyll: for now after five centuries, when Wallace's birthplace is unknown even to the Scots; and the Admirable Crichton still more rapidly is grown a shadow; and Edward Longshanks sleeps unregarded save by a few antiquarian English,—Tyll's native village is pointed out with pride to the traveller, and his tombstone, with a sculptured pun on his name, an Owl, namely, and a Glass, still stands, or pretends to stand, 'at Möllen, near Lübeck,' where, since 1350, his once nimble bones have been at rest. Tyll, in the calling he had chosen, naturally led a wandering life, as place after place became too hot for him; by which means he saw into many things with his own eyes: having been not only over all Westphalia and Saxony, but even in Poland, and as far as Rome. That in his old days, like other great men, he became an Autobiographer, and in trustful winter evenings, not on paper, but on air, and to the laughter-lovers of Möllen, composed this work himself, is purely a hypothesis; certain only that it came forth originally in the dialect of this region, namely the *Platt-Deutsch*; and was therefrom translated, probably about a century afterwards, into its present High German, as Lessing conjectures, by one Thomas Mürner, who on other grounds is not unknown to antiquaries. For the rest, write it who might, the Book is here, 'abounding,' as a wise Critic

remarks, 'in inventive humour, in rough merriment and broad drollery, not without a keen rugged shrewdness of insight; which properties must have made it irresistibly captivating to the popular sense; and, with all its fantastic extravagancies and roguish crotchets, in many points instructive.'

From Tyll's so captivating achievements we shall here select one to insert some account of; the rather as the tale is soon told, and by means of it we catch a little trait of manners, and, through Tyll's spectacles, may peep into the interior of a Household, even of a Parsonage, in those old days.

'It chanced after so many adventures, that Eulenspiegel came to a Parson, who promoted him to be his Sacristan, or as we now say, Sexton. Of this Parson it is recorded that he kept a Concubine, who had but one eye; she also had a spite at Tyll, and was wont to speak evil of him to his master, and report his rogueries. Now while Eulenspiegel held this Sextoncy the Easter-season came, and there was to be a play set forth of the Resurrection of our Lord. And as the people were not learned, and could not read, the Parson took his Concubine and stationed her in the holy Sepulchre by way of Angel. Which thing Eulenspiegel seeing, he took to him three of the simplest persons that could be found there, to enact the Three Marys; and the Parson himself, with a flag in his hand, represented Christ. Thereupon spake Eulenspiegel to the simple persons: "When the Angel asks you, Whom ye seek; ye must answer, The Parson's one-eyed Concubine." Now it came to pass that the time arrived when they were to act, and the Angel asked them: "Whom seek ye here?" and they answered, as Eulenspiegel had taught and bidden them, and said: "We seek the Parson's one-eyed Concubine." Whereby did the Parson observe that he was made a mock of. And when the Parson's Concubine heard the same, she started out of the Grave, and aimed a box at Eulenspiegel's face, but missed him, and hit one of the simple persons, who were representing the Three Marys. This latter then returned her a slap on the mouth, whereupon she caught him by the hair. But his Wife seeing this, came running thither, and fell upon the Parson's Harlot. Which thing the Parson discerning, he threw down his flag, and sprang forward to his Harlot's assistance. Thus gave they one another hearty thwacking and basting, and there was great uproar in the Church. But when Eulenspiegel perceived that they all had one another by the ears in the Church, he went his ways, and came no more back.'[1]

[1] Flögel, iv. 290. For more of Eulenspiegel see Görres *Uber die Volksbücher*.

These and the like pleasant narratives were the People's Comedy in those days. Neither was their Tragedy wanting; as indeed both spring up spontaneously in all regions of human Life; however, their chief work of this latter class, the wild, deep and now world-renowned *Legend of Faust*, belongs to a somewhat later date.[1]

Thus, though the Poetry which spoke in rhyme was feeble enough, the spirit of Poetry could nowise be regarded as extinct; while Fancy, Imagination and all the intellectual faculties necessary for that art, were in active exercise. Neither had the Enthusiasm of heart, on which it still more intimately depends, died out; but only taken another form. In lower degrees it expressed itself as an ardent zeal for

[1] To the fifteenth century, say some who fix it on Johann Faust, the Goldsmith and partial Inventor of Printing: to the sixteenth century, say others, referring it to Johann Faust, Doctor in Philosophy; which individual did actually, as the Tradition also bears, study first at Wittenberg (where he might be one of Luther's pupils), then at Ingolstadt, where also he taught, and had a *Famulus* named Wagner, son of a clergyman at Wasserberg. Melanchthon, Tritheim and other credible witnesses, some of whom had seen the man, vouch sufficiently for these facts. The rest of the Doctor's history is much more obscure. He seems to have been of a vehement, unquiet temper; skilled in Natural Philosophy, and perhaps in the occult science of Conjuring, by aid of which two gifts, a much shallower man, wandering in Need and Pride over the world in those days, might, without any Mephistopheles, have worked wonders enough. Neverthe less, that he rode off through the air on a wine-cask from Auerbach's Keller at Leipzig, in 1523, seems questionable; though an old carving, in that venerable Tavern, still mutely asserts it to the toper of this day. About 1560, his term of Thaumaturgy being over, he disappeared: whether, under feigned name, by the rope of some hangman; or 'frightfully torn in pieces by the Devil, near the village of Rimlich, between Twelve and One in the morning,' let each reader judge for himself. The latter was clearly George Rudolf Wiedemann's opinion, whose *Veritable History of the abominable Sins of Dr. Johann Faust* came out at Hamburg in 1599; and is no less circumstantially announced in the old People's-Book, *That everywhere-infamous Arch-Black-Artist and Conjuror, Dr. Faust's Compact with the Devil, wonderful Walk and Conversation, and terrible End*, printed, seemingly without date, at Köln (Cologne) and Nürnberg; read by every one; written by we know not whom. See again, for farther insight, Görres *Ueber die deutschen Volksbücher*. Another Work (Leipzig, 1824), expressly 'on Faust and the Wandering Jew,' which latter, in those times, wandered much in Germany, is also referred to. *Conver Lexicon*, § *Faust*.

Knowledge and Improvement; for spiritual excellence such as the time held out and prescribed. This was no languid, low-minded age; but of earnest busy effort, in all provinces of culture, resolutely struggling forward. Classical Literature, after long hindrances, had now found its way into Germany also: old Rome was open, with all its wealth, to the intelligent eye; scholars of Chrysoloras were fast unfolding the treasures of Greece. School Philosophy, which had never obtained firm footing among the Germans, was in all countries drawing to a close; but the subtle, piercing vision, which it had fostered and called into activity, was henceforth to employ itself with new profit or more substantial interests. In such manifold praiseworthy endeavours the most ardent mind had ample arena.

A higher, purer enthusiasm, again, which no longer found its place in chivalrous Minstrelsy, might still retire to meditate and worship in religious Cloisters, where, amid all the corruption of monkish manners, there were not wanting men who aimed at, and accomplished, the highest problem of manhood, a life of spiritual Truth. Among the Germans especially, that deep-feeling, deep-thinking, devout temper, now degenerating into abstruse theosophy, now purifying itself into holy eloquence and clear apostolic light, was awake in this era; a temper which had long dwelt, and still dwells there; which ere long was to render that people worthy the honour of giving Europe a new Reformation, a new Religion. As an example of monkish diligence and zeal, if of nothing more, we here mention the German Bible of Mathias von Behaim, which, in his Hermitage at Halle, he rendered from the Vulgate, in 1343; the Manuscript of which is still to be seen in Leipzig. Much more conspicuous stand two other German Priests of this Period; to whom, as connected with Literature also, a few words must now be devoted.

Johann Tauler is a name which fails in no Literary History of Germany: he was a man famous in his own day as the most eloquent of preachers; is still noted by critics for his

intellectual deserts; by pious persons, especially of the class called Mystics, is still studied as a practical instructor; and by all true inquirers prized as a person of high talent and moral worth. Tauler was a Dominican Monk; seems to have lived and preached at Strasburg; where, as his gravestone still testifies, he died in 1361. His devotional works have been often edited: one of his modern admirers has written his biography; wherein perhaps this is the strangest fact, if it be one, that once in the pulpit, 'he grew suddenly dumb, and did nothing but weep; in which despondent state he continued for two whole years.' Then, however, he again lifted up his voice, with new energy and new potency. We learn farther, that he 'renounced the dialect of Philosophy, and spoke direct to the heart in language of the heart.' His Sermons, composed in Latin and delivered in German, in which language, after repeated renovations and changes of dialect, they are still read, have, with his other writings, been characterised, by a native critic worthy of confidence, in these terms:

'They contain a treasure of meditations, hints, indications, full of heartfelt piety, which still speak to the inmost longings and noblest wants of man's mind. His style is abrupt, compressed, significant in its conciseness; the nameless depth of feelings struggles with the phraseology. He was the first that wrested from our German speech the fit expression for ideas of moral Reason and Emotion, and has left us riches in that kind, such as the zeal for purity and fulness of language in our own days cannot leave unheeded.'—Tauler, it is added, 'was a man who, imbued with genuine Devoutness, as it springs from the depths of a soul strengthened in self-contemplation, and, free and all-powerful, rules over Life and Effort,—attempted to train and win the people for a duty which had hitherto been considered as that of the learned class alone: to raise the Lay-world into moral study of Religion for themselves, that so, enfranchised from the bonds of unreflecting custom, they might regulate Creed and Conduct by strength self-acquired. He taught men to look within; by spiritual contemplation to feel the secret of their higher Destiny; to seek in their own souls what from without is never, or too scantily afforded; self-believing, to create what, by the dead letter of foreign Tradition, can never be brought forth.'[1]

[1] Wachler, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der deutschen National-litteratur* (Lectures on the History of German National Literature), b. i. s. 131.

Known to all Europe, as Tauler is to Germany, and of a class with him, as a man of antique Christian walk, of warm devoutly-feeling poetic spirit, and insight and experience in the deepest regions of man's heart and life, follows, in the next generation, Thomas Hamerken, or Hammerlein (*Malleolus*); usually named *Thomas à Kempis*, that is *Thomas of Kempen*, a village near Cologne, where he was born in 1388. Others contend that Kampen in Overyssel was his birthplace; however, in either case at that era, more especially considering what he did, we can here regard him as a *Deutscher*, a German. For his spiritual and intellectual character we may refer to his works, written in the Latin tongue, and still known; above all, to his far-famed work *De Imitatione Christi*, which has been praised by such men as Luther, Leibnitz, Haller; and, what is more, has been read, and continues to be read, with moral profit, in all Christian languages and communions, having passed through upwards of a thousand editions, which number is yet daily increasing. A new English *Thomas à Kempis* was published only the other year. But the venerable man deserves a word from us, not only as a high, spotless Priest, and father of the Church, at a time when such were rare, but as a zealous promoter of learning, which, in his own country, he accomplished much to forward. Hammerlein, the son of poor parents, had been educated at the famous school of Deventer; he himself instituted a similar one at Zwoll, which long continued the grand classical seminary of the North. Among his own pupils we find enumerated Moritz von Spiegelberg, Rudolf von Lange, Rudolf Agricola, Antonius Liber, Ludwig Dringenberg, Alexander Hegius; of whom Agricola, with other two, by advice of their teacher, visited Italy to study Greek; the whole six, united through manhood and life, as they had been in youth and at school, are regarded as the founders of true classical literature among the Germans. Their scholastico-monastic establishments at Deventer, with Zwoll and its other numerous offspring, which rapidly extended themselves over the north-west of Europe

from Artois to Silesia, and operated powerfully both in a moral and intellectual view, are among the characteristic redeeming features of that time; but the details of them fall not within our present limits.[1]

If now, quitting the Cloister and Library, we look abroad over active Life, and the general state of culture and spiritual endeavour as manifested there, we have on all hands the cheering prospect of a society in full progress. The Practical Spirit, which had pressed forward into Poetry itself, could not but be busy and successful in those provinces where its home specially lies. Among the Germans, it is true, so far as political condition was concerned, the aspect of affairs had not changed for the better. The Imperial Constitution was weakened and loosened into the mere semblance of a Government; the head of which had still the title, but no longer the reality of sovereign power; so that Germany, ever since the times of Rudolf, had, as it were, ceased to be one great nation, and become a disunited, often conflicting aggregate of small nations. Nay, we may almost say, of petty districts, or even of households: for now, when every pitiful Baron claimed to be an independent potentate, and exercised his divine right of peace and war too often in plundering the industrious Burgher, public Law could no longer vindicate the weak against the strong: except the venerable unwritten code of *Faustrecht* (Club-Law), there was no other valid. On every steep rock, or difficult fastness, these dread sovereigns perched themselves; studding the country with innumerable *Raubschlösser* (Robber-Towers), which now in the eye of the picturesque tourist look interesting enough, but in those days were interesting on far other grounds. Herein dwelt a race of persons, proud, ignorant, hungry; who, boasting of an endless pedigree, talked familiarly of living on the produce of their 'Saddles' (*vom Sattel zu leben*), that is to say, by the profession of highwayman; for which unluckily, as just hinted, there was then no effectual gallows. Some,

[1] See Eichhorn's *Geschichte der Litteratur*, b. ii. s. 134.

indeed, might plunder as the eagle, others as the vulture and crow; but, in general, from men cultivating that walk of life, no profit in any other was to be looked for. Vain was it, however, for the Kaiser to publish edict on edict against them; nay, if he destroyed their Robber-Towers, new ones were built; was the old wolf hunted down, the cub had escaped, who reappeared when his teeth were grown. Not till industry and social cultivation had everywhere spread, and risen supreme, could that brood, in detail, be extirpated or tamed.

Neither was this miserable defect of police the only misery in such a state of things. For the saddle-eating Baron, even in pacific circumstances, naturally looked down on the fruit-producing Burgher; who, again, feeling himself a wiser, wealthier, better and in time a stronger man, ill brooked this procedure, and retaliated, or, by quite declining such communications, avoided it. Thus, throughout long centuries, and after that old Code of Club-Law had been well-nigh abolished, the effort of the nation was still divided into two courses; the Noble and the Citizen would not work together, freely imparting and receiving their several gifts; but the culture of the polite arts, and that of the useful arts, had to proceed with mutual disadvantage, each on its separate footing. Indeed that supercilious and too marked distinction of ranks, which so ridiculously characterised the Germans, has only in very recent times disappeared.

Nevertheless here, as it ever does, the strength of the country lay in the middle classes; which were sound and active, and, in spite of all these hindrances, daily advancing. The Free Towns, which, in Germany as elsewhere, the sovereign favoured, held within their walls a race of men as brave as they of the Robber-Towers, but exercising their bravery on fitter objects; who, by degrees, too, ventured into the field against even the greatest of these kinglets, and in many a stout fight taught them a juristic doctrine, which no head with all its helmets was too thick for taking in. The

Four Forest Cantons had already testified in this way; their Tells and Stauffachers preaching, with apostolic blows and knocks, like so many Luthers; whereby, from their remote Alpine glens, all lands and all times have heard them, and believed them. By dint of such logic it began to be understood everywhere, that a Man, whether clothed in purple cloaks or in tanned sheepskins, wielding the sceptre or the oxgoad, is neither Deity nor Beast, but simply a Man, and must comport himself accordingly.

But Commerce of itself was pouring new strength into every peaceable community; the Hanse League, now in full vigour, secured the fruits of industry over all the North. The havens of the Netherlands, thronged with ships from every sea, transmitted or collected their wide-borne freight over Germany; where, far inland, flourished market-cities, with their cunning workmen, their spacious warehouses, and merchants who in opulence vied with the richest. Except, perhaps, in the close vicinity of Robber-Towers, and even there not always nor altogether, Diligence, good Order, peaceful Abundance were everywhere conspicuous in Germany. Petrarch has celebrated, in warm terms, the beauties of the Rhine, as he witnessed them; the rich, embellished, cultivated aspect of land and people: Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius the Second, expresses himself, in the next century, with still greater emphasis: he says, and he could judge, having seen both, 'that the King of Scotland did not live so handsomely as a moderate Citizen of Nürnberg': indeed Conrad Celtes, another contemporary witness, informs us, touching these same citizens, that their wives went abroad loaded with the richest jewels, that 'most of their household utensils were of silver and gold.' For, as Æneas Sylvius adds, 'their mercantile activity is astonishing; the greater part of the German nation consists of merchants.' Thus too, in Augsburg, the Fugger family, which sprang, like that of the Medici, from smallest beginnings, were fast rising into that height of commercial greatness, such that Charles v., in

viewing the Royal Treasury at Paris, could say, "I have a weaver in Augsburg able to buy it all with his own gold."[1] With less satisfaction the same haughty Monarch had to see his own Nephew wedded to the fair Philippine Welser, daughter of another merchant in that city, and for wisdom and beauty the paragon of her time.[2]

[1] Charles had his reasons for such a speech. This same Anton Fugger, to whom he alluded here, had often stood by him in straits; showing a munificence and even generosity worthy of the proudest princes. During the celebrated Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, the Emperor lodged for a whole year in Anton's house; and Anton was a man to warm his Emperor 'at a fire of cinnamon-wood,' and to burn therein 'the bonds for large sums owing him by his majesty.' For all which, Anton and his kindred had countships and princeships in abundance; also the right to coin money, but no solid bullion to exercise such right on; which, however, they repeatedly did on bullion of their own. This Anton left six millions of gold-crowns in cash; 'besides precious articles, jewels, properties in all countries of Europe, and both the Indies.' The Fuggers had ships on every sea, wagons on every highway; they worked the Carinthian Mines; even Albrecht Dürer's Pictures had to pass through their warehouses to the Italian market. However, this family had other merits than their mountains of metal, their kindness to needy Sovereigns, and even their all-embracing spirit of commercial enterprise. They were famed for acts of general beneficence, and did much charity where no imperial thanks were to be looked for. To found Hospitals and Schools, on the most liberal scale, was a common thing with them. In the sixteenth century, three benevolent brothers of the House purchased a suburb of Augsburg; rebuilt it with small commodious houses, to be let to indigent industrious burghers for a trifling rent: this is the well-known *Fuggerei*, which still existing, with its own walls and gate, maintains their name in daily currency there.—The founder of this remarkable family did actually drive the shuttle in the village of Göggingen, near Augsburg, about the middle of the Fourteenth Century; 'but in 1619,' says the *Spiegel der Ehren* (Mirror of Honour), 'the noble stem had so branched out, that there were forty-seven Counts and Countesses belonging to it, and of young descendants as many as there are days in the year.' Four stout boughs of this same noble stem, in the rank of Princes, still subsist and flourish. 'Thus in the generous Fuggers,' says that above-named *Mirror*, 'was fulfilled our Saviour's promise: Give, and it shall be given you.' *Conv. Lexicon*, § *Fugger-Geschlecht.*

[2] The Welsers were of patrician descent, and had for many centuries followed commerce at Augsburg, where, next only to the Fuggers, they played a high part. It was they for example, that, at their own charges, first colonised Venezuela; that equipped the first German ship to India, 'the Journal of which still exists'; they united with the Fuggers to lend Charles v. twelve *Tonnen Gold*, 1,200,000 Florins. The fair Philippine, by her pure charms and honest

In this state of economical prosperity, Literature and Art, such kinds of them at least as had a practical application, could not want encouragement. It is mentioned as one of the furtherances to Classical Learning among the Germans, that these Free Towns, as well as numerous petty Courts of Princes, exercising a sovereign power, required individuals of some culture to conduct their Diplomacy; one man able at least to write a handsome Latin style was an indispensable requisite. For a long while even this small accomplishment was not to be acquired in Germany; where, such had been the troublous condition of the Governments, there were yet, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, no Universities: however, a better temper and better fortune began at length to prevail among the German Sovereigns; the demands of the time insisted on fulfilment. The University of Prague was founded in 1348, that of Vienna in 1364,[1] and now, as if to make up for the delay, princes and communities on all hands made haste to establish similar Institutions; so that before the end of the century we find three others, Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt; in the course of the next, no fewer than eight more, of which Leipzig (in 1404) is the most remarkable. Neither did this honourable zeal grow cool in the sixteenth century, or even down to our own, when Germany, boasting of some forty great Schools and twenty-two Universities, four of which date within the last thirty

wiles, worked out a reconciliation with Kaiser Ferdinand the First, her Father-in-law; lived thirty happy years with her husband; and had medals struck by him, *Divæ Philippinæ*, in honour of her, when (at Inspruck in 1580) he became a widower. *Conv. Lexicon*, § *Welser*.

[1] There seems to be some controversy about the precedence here: Bouterwek gives Vienna, with a date 1333, as the earliest; Koch again puts Heidelberg, 1346, in front; the dates in the Text profess to be taken from Meiner's *Geschichte der Entstehung und Entwickelung der Hohen Schulen unsers Erdtheils* (History of the Origin and Development of High Schools in Europe), Göttingen, 1802. The last-established University is that of München (Munich), in 1826. Prussia alone has 21,000 Public Schoolmasters, specially trained to their profession, sometimes even sent to travel for improvement, at the cost of Government. What says 'the most enlightened nation in the world' to this?—Eats its pudding, and says little or nothing.

years, may fairly reckon itself the best school-provided country in Europe; as, indeed, those who in any measure know it, are aware that it is also indisputably the best educated.

Still more decisive are the proofs of national activity, of progressive culture, among the Germans, if we glance at what concerns the practical Arts. Apart from Universities and learned show, there has always dwelt, in those same Nürnbergs and Augsburgs, a solid, quietly-perseverant spirit, full of old Teutonic character and old Teutonic sense; whereby, ever and anon, from under the bonnet of some rugged German artisan or staid burgher, this and the other World-Invention has been starting-forth, where such was least of all looked for. Indeed, with regard to practical Knowledge in general, if we consider the present history and daily life of mankind, it must be owned that while each nation has contributed a share,—the largest share, at least of such shares as can be appropriated and fixed on any special contributor, belongs to Germany. Copernic, Hevel, Kepler, Otto Guericke, are of other times; but in this era also the spirit of Inquiry, of Invention, was especially busy. Gunpowder (of the thirteenth century), though Milton gives the credit of it to Satan, has helped mightily to lessen the horrors of War: thus much at least must be admitted in its favour, that it secures the dominion of civilised over savage man: nay, hereby, in personal contests, not brute Strength, but Courage and Ingenuity can avail; for the Dwarf and the Giant are alike strong with pistols between them. Neither can Valour now find its best arena in War, in Battle, which is henceforth a matter of calculation and strategy, and the soldier a chess-pawn to shoot and be shot at; whereby that noble quality may at length come to reserve itself for other more legitimate occasions, of which, in this our Life-Battle with Destiny, there are enough. And thus Gunpowder, if it spread the havoc of War, mitigates it in a still higher degree; like some Inoculation,—to which may an extirpating Vaccination one day succeed! It ought to be stated,

however, that the claim of Schwartz to the original invention is dubious; to the sole invention altogether unfounded: the recipe stands, under disguise, in the writings of Roger Bacon; the article itself was previously known in the East.

Far more indisputable are the advantages of Printing: and if the story of Brother Schwartz's mortar giving fire and driving his pestle through the ceiling, in the city of Mentz, as the painful Monk and Alchymist was accidentally pounding the ingredients of our first Gunpowder, is but a fable,—that of our first Book being printed there is much better ascertained. Johann Gutenberg was a native of Mentz; and there, in company with Faust and Schöffer, appears to have completed his invention between the years 1440 and 1449: the famous 'Forty-two line Bible' was printed there in 1455.[1] Of this noble art, which is like an infinitely intensated organ of Speech, whereby the Voice of a small transitory man may reach not only through all earthly Space, but through all earthly Time, it were needless to repeat the often-repeated praises; or speculate on the practical effects, the most momentous of which are, perhaps, but now becoming visible. On this subject of the Press, and its German origin, a far humbler remark may be in place here: namely, that Rag-paper, the material on which Printing works and lives, was also invented in Germany some hundred and fifty years before. 'The oldest specimens of this article yet known to exist,' says Eichhorn, 'are some Documents, of the year 1318, in the Archives of the Hospital at Kaufbeuern. Breitkopf (*Vom Ursprung der Spielkarten*, On the Origin of Cards) has demonstrated our claim to the invention; and that France and England borrowed it from Germany, and Spain from Italy.[2]

[1] As to the Dutch claim, it rests only on vague local traditions, which were never heard of publicly till their Lorenz Coster had been dead almost a hundred and fifty years; so that, out of Holland, it finds few partisans.

[2] B. ii. s. 91.—'The first German Paper-mill we have sure account of,' says Koch, 'worked at Nürnberg in 1390.' Vol. i. p. 35.

On the invention of Printing there followed naturally a multiplication of Books, and a new activity, which has ever since proceeded at an accelerating rate, in the business of Literature; but for the present, no change in its character or objects. Those Universities, and other Establishments and Improvements, were so many tools which the spirit of the time had devised, not for working-out new paths, which were their ulterior issue, but in the meanwhile for proceeding more commodiously on the old path. In the Prague University, it is true, whither Wickliffe's writings had found their way, a Teacher of more earnest tone had risen, in the person of John Huss, Rector there; whose Books, *Of the Six Errors* and *Of the Church*, still more his energetic, zealously polemical Discourses to the people, were yet unexampled on the Continent. The shameful murder of this man, who lived and died as beseemed a Martyr; and the stern vengeance which his countrymen took for it, unhappily not on the Constance Cardinals, but on less offensive Bohemian Catholics, kept-up during twenty years, on the Eastern Border of Germany, an agitating tumult, not only of opinion, but of action: however, the fierce, indomitable Zisca being called away, and the pusillanimous Emperor offering terms, which, indeed, he did not keep, this uproar subsided, and the national activity proceeded in its former course.

In German Literature, during those years, nothing presents itself as worthy of notice here. Chronicles were written; Class-books for the studious, edifying Homilies, in varied guise, for the busy, were compiled: a few Books of Travels make their appearance, among which Translations from our too fabulous countryman, Mandeville, are perhaps the most remarkable. For the rest, Life continued to be looked at less with poetic admiration, than in a spirit of observation and comparison: not without many a protest against clerical and secular error; such, however, seldom rising into the style of grave hate and hostility, but playfully expressing themselves in satire. The old effort towards the Useful; in

Literature, the old prevalence of the Didactic, especially of the Æsopic, is everywhere manifest. Of this Æsopic spirit, what phases it successively assumed, and its significance in these, there were much to be said. However, in place of multiplying smaller instances and aspects, let us now take up the highest; and with the best of all Apologues, *Reynard the Fox*, terminate our survey of that Fable-loving time.

The story of *Reinecke Fuchs*, or, to give it the original Low-German name, *Reineke de Fos*, is, more than any other, a truly European performance: for some centuries, a universal household possession and secular Bible, read everywhere, in the palace and the hut: it still interests us, moreover, by its intrinsic worth, being, on the whole, the most poetical and meritorious production of our Western World in that kind; or perhaps of the whole World, though, in such matters, the West has generally yielded to, and learned from, the East.

Touching the origin of this Book, as often happens in like cases, there is a controversy, perplexed not only by inevitable ignorance, but also by anger and false patriotism. Into this vexed sea we have happily no call to venture; and shall merely glance for a moment, from the firm land, where all that can specially concern us in the matter stands rescued and safe. The oldest printed Edition of our actual *Reynard* is that of Lübeck, in 1498; of which there is a copy, understood to be the only one, still extant in the Wolfenbüttel Library. This oldest Edition is in the Low-German or Saxon tongue, and appears to have been produced by Hinrek van Alkmer, who in the preface calls himself 'Schoolmaster and Tutor of that noble 'virtuous Prince and Lord, the Duke of Lorraine'; and says farther, that by order of this same worthy sovereign, he 'sought out and rendered the present Book from Walloon and French tongue into German, to the praise and honour of God, and wholesome edification of

whoso readeth therein.' Which candid and business-like statement would doubtless have continued to yield entire satisfaction; had it not been that, in modern days, and while this first Lübeck Edition was still lying in its dusty recess unknown to Bibliomaniacs, another account, dated some hundred years later, and supported by a little subsequent hearsay, had been raked up: how the real Author was Nicholas Baumann, Professor at Rostock; how he had been Secretary to the Duke of Juliers, but was driven from his service by wicked cabals; and so in revenge composed this satirical adumbration of the Juliers Court; putting on the title-page, to avoid consequences, the feigned tale of its being rendered from the French and Walloon tongue, and the feigned name of Hinrek van Alkmer, who, for the rest, was never Schoolmaster and Tutor at Lorraine, or anywhere else, but a mere man of straw, created for the nonce out of so many Letters of the Alphabet. Hereupon excessive debate, and a learned sharp-shooting, with victory-shouts on both sides: into which we nowise enter. Some touch of human sympathy does draw us towards Hinrek, whom, if he was once a real man, with bones and sinews, stomach and provender-scrip, it is mournful to see evaporated away into mere vowels and consonants: however, beyond a kind wish, we can give him no help. In Literary History, except on this one occasion, as seems indisputable enough, he is nowhere mentioned or hinted at.

Leaving Hinrek and Nicolaus, then, to fight-out their quarrel as they may, we remark that the clearest issue of it would throw little light on the origin of *Reinecke*. The victor could at most claim to be the first German redactor of this Fable, and the happiest; whose work had superseded and obliterated all preceding ones whatsoever; but nowise to be the inventor thereof, who must be sought for in a much remoter period. There are even two printed versions of the Tale, prior in date to this of Lübeck; a Dutch one, at Delft, in 1484; and one by Caxton in English, in 1481, which

seems to be the earliest of all.[1] These two differ essentially from Hinrek's; still more so does the French *Roman du nouveau Renard*, composed 'by Jacquemars Gielée at Lisle, about the year 1290,' which yet exists in manuscript. however, they sufficiently verify that statement, by some supposed to be feigned, of the German redactor's having 'sought and rendered' his work from the Walloon and French; in which latter tongue, as we shall soon see, some shadow of it had been known and popular, long centuries before that time. For besides Gielée's work, we have a *Renard Couronné* of still earlier, a *Renard Contrefait* of somewhat later date: and Chroniclers inform us that, at the noted Festival given by Philip the Fair, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, among the dramatic entertainments, was a whole Life of Reynard; wherein it must not surprise us that he 'ended by becoming Pope, and still, under the Tiara, continued to eat poultry.' Nay, curious inquirers have discovered, on the French and German borders, some vestige of the Story even in Carlovingian times; which, indeed, again makes it a German original: they will have it that a certain Reinhard, or Reinecke, Duke of Lorraine, who, in the ninth century, by his craft and exhaustless stratagems, worked strange mischief in that region, many times overreaching King Zwentibald himself, and at last, in his stronghold of Durfos, proving impregnable to him,—had in satirical songs of that period been celebrated as a *fox*, as *Reinhard the Fox*, and so given rise afar off to this Apologue, at least to the title of it. The

[1] Caxton's Edition, a copy of which is in the British Museum, bears title: *Hystorye of Reynart the Foxe;* and begins thus: 'It was aboute the tyme of Pentecoste or Whytsontyde that the wodes comynly be lusty and gladsome, and the trees clad with levys and blossoms, and the grounds with herbes and flowers sweete smellyng;'—where, as in many other passages, the fact that Caxton and Alkmer had the same original before them is manifest enough. Our venerable Printer says in conclusion: 'I have not added ne mynnsshed but have followed as nyghe as I can my copye whych was in dutche; and by me Willm Caxton translated in to this rude and symple englyssh in thabbey of Westminster, and fynnyshed the vi daye of Juyn the yere of our lord 1481, the 21 yere of the regne of Kynge Edward the iiijth.'

name *Isegrim*, as applied to the Wolf, these same speculators deduce from an Austrian Count Isengrin, who, in those old days, had revolted against Kaiser Arnulph, and otherwise exhibited too wolfish a disposition. Certain it is, at least, that both designations were in universal use during the twelfth century; they occur, for example, in one of the two *sirventes* which our Cœur-de-Lion has left us: 'Ye have promised me fidelity,' says he, 'but ye have kept it as the Wolf did to the Fox,' as *Isangrin* did to *Reinhart*.[1] Nay, perhaps the ancient circulation of some such Song, or Tale, among the French, is best of all evinced by the fact that this same *Reinhart*, or *Renard*, is still the only word in their language for *Fox*; and thus, strangely enough, the Proper may have become an Appellative; and sly Duke Reinhart, at an era when the French tongue was first evolving itself from the rubbish of Latin and German, have insinuated his name into Natural as well as Political History.

From all which, so much at least would appear: That the Fable of *Reynard the Fox*, which in the German version we behold completed, nowise derived its completeness from the individual there named Hinrek van Alkmer, or from any other individual or people; but rather, that being in old times universally current, it was taken up by poets and satirists of all countries; from each received some accession or improvement; and properly has no single author. We must observe, however, that as yet it had attained no fixation or consistency; no version was decidedly preferred to every other. Caxton's and the Dutch appear, at best, but as the skeleton of what afterwards became a body; of the old Walloon version, said to have been discovered lately, we are taught to entertain a similar opinion:[2] in the existing French versions, which are all older, either in Gielée's, or in the others, there is even less analogy. Loosely conjoined, there-

[1] Flögel (iii. 31), who quotes the *Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours*, t. i. p. 63.

[2] See Scheller: *Reineke de Fos, To Brunswyk*, 1825; Vorrede.

fore, and only in the state of dry bones, was it that Hinrek, or Nicolaus, or some Lower-Saxon whoever he might be, found the story; and blowing on it with the breath of genius, raised it up into a consistent Fable. Many additions and some exclusions he must have made; was probably enough assisted by personal experience of a Court, whether that of Juliers or some other; perhaps also he admitted personal allusions, and doubtless many an oblique glance at existing things: and thus was produced the Low-German *Reineke de Fos*; which version, shortly after its appearance, had extinguished all the rest, and come to be, what it still is, the sole veritable representative of *Reynard*, inasmuch as all subsequent translations and editions have derived themselves from it.

The farther history of *Reinecke* is easily traced. In this new guise, it spread abroad over all the world, with a scarcely exampled rapidity; fixing itself also as a firm possession in most countries, where, indeed, in this character, we still find it. It was printed and rendered, innumerable times: in the original dialect alone, the last Editor has reckoned up more than twenty Editions; on one of which, for example, we find such a name as that of Heinrich Voss. It was first translated into High-German in 1545; into Latin in 1567, by Hartmann Schopper, whose smooth style and rough fortune keep him in memory with Scholars:[1] a new version into short

[1] While engaged in this Translation, at Freiburg in Baden, he was impressed as a soldier, and carried, apparently in fetters, to Vienna, having given his work to another to finish. At Vienna he stood not long in the ranks; having fallen violently sick, and being thrown out in the streets to recover there. He says, 'he was without bed, and had to seek quarters on the muddy pavement, in a Barrel.' Here too, in the night, some excessively straitened individual stole from him his cloak and sabre. However, men were not all hyænas: one Josias Hufnagel, unknown to him, but to whom by his writings he was known, took him under his roof, procured medical assistance, equipped him anew; so that 'in the harvest-season, being half-cured, he could return, or rather re-crawl to Frankfort-on-the-Mayn.' There too 'a Magister Johann Cuipius, Christian Egenolph's son-in-law, kindly received him,' and encouraged him to finish his Translation; as accordingly he did, dedicating it to the Emperor, with doleful complaints, fruitless or not is unknown. For now poor Hartmann, no longer an

German verse appeared next century; in our own times, Goethe has not disdained to reproduce it, by means of his own, in a third shape: of Soltau's version, into literal doggerel, we have already testified. Long generations before, it had been manufactured into Prose, for the use of the people, and was sold on stalls; where still, with the needful changes in spelling, and printed on greyest paper, it tempts the speculative.

Thus has our old Fable, rising like some River in the remote distance, from obscure rivulets, gathered strength out of every valley, out of every country, as it rolled on. It is European in two senses; for as all Europe contributed to it, so all Europe has enjoyed it. Among the Germans, *Reinecke Fuchs* was long a House-book and universal Best-companion: it has been lectured on in Universities, quoted in Imperial council-halls; it lay on the toilette of Princesses; and was thumbed to pieces on the bench of the Artisan; we hear of grave men ranking it only next to the Bible. Neither, as we said, was its popularity confined to home; Translations ere long appeared in French, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, English:[1] nor was that same stall-honour, which has been reckoned the truest literary celebrity, refused it here; perhaps many a reader of these pages may, like the writer of them,

Autobiographer, quite vanishes, and we can understand only that he laid his wearied back one day in a most still bed, where the blanket of the Night softly enwrapped him and all his woes.— —His book is entitled *Opus poeticum de admirabili Fallaciâ et Astutiâ Vulpeculæ Reinekes*, etc. etc.; and in the Dedication and Preface contains all these details.

[1] Besides Caxton's original, of which little is known among us but the name, we have two versions; one in 1667, 'with excellent Morals and Expositions,' which was reprinted in 1681, and followed in 1684 by a Continuation, called the *Shifts of Reynardine the Son of Reynard*, of English growth; another in 1708, slightly altered from the former, explaining what appears doubtful or allegorical; 'it being originally written,' says the brave Editor elsewhere, 'by an eminent Statesman of the German Empire, to show some Men their Follies, and correct the Vices of the Times he lived in.' Not only *Reynardine*, but a second Appendix, *Cawood the Rook*, appears here; also there are 'curious Devices or Pictures.'—Of Editions 'printed for the Flying-Stationers' we say nothing.

recollect the hours, when, hidden from the unfeeling gaze of pedagogue, he swallowed *The most pleasant and delightful History of Reynard the Fox*, like stolen waters, with a timorous joy

So much for the outward fortunes of this remarkable Book. It comes before us with a character such as can belong only to a very few; that of being a true World's-Book, which through centuries was everywhere at home, the spirit of which diffused itself into all languages and all minds. These quaint Æsopic figures have painted themselves in innumerable heads; that rough, deep-lying humour has been the laughter of many generations. So that, at worst, we must regard this *Reinecke* as an ancient Idol, once worshipped, and still interesting for that circumstance, were the sculpture never so rude. We can love it, moreover, as being indigenous, wholly of our own creation: it sprang up from European sense and character, and was a faithful type and organ of these.

But independently of all extrinsic considerations, this Fable of *Reinecke* may challenge a judgment on its own merits. Cunningly constructed, and not without a true poetic life, we must admit it to be: great power of conception and invention, great pictorial fidelity, a warm, sunny tone of colouring, are manifest enough. It is full of broad rustic mirth; inexhaustible in comic devices; a World-Saturnalia, where Wolves tonsured into Monks, and nigh starved by short commons, Foxes pilgriming to Rome for absolution, Cocks pleading at the judgment-bar, make strange mummery. Nor is this wild Parody of Human Life without its meaning and moral: it is an air-pageant from Fancy's dream-grotto, yet wisdom lurks in it; as we gaze, the vision becomes poetic and prophetic. A true Irony must have dwelt in the Poet's heart and head; here, under grotesque shadows, he gives us the saddest picture of Reality; yet for us without sadness; his figures mask themselves in uncouth bestial vizards, and enact, gambolling; their Tragedy dissolves into sardonic grins.

He has a deep, heartfelt Humour, sporting with the world and its evils in kind mockery: this is the poetic *soul*, round which the outward *material* has fashioned itself into living coherence. And so, in that rude old Apologue, we have still a mirror, though now tarnished and timeworn, of true magic reality; and can discern there, in cunning reflex, some image both of our destiny and of our duty: for now, as then, Prudence is the only virtue sure of its reward, and Cunning triumphs where Honesty is worsted; and now, as then, it is the wise man's part to know this, and cheerfully look for it, and cheerfully defy it:

Ut vulpis adulatio
Here through his own world moveth,
Sic hominis et ratio
Most like to Reynard's proveth.
Ut vulpis adulatio
Nu in de werlde blikket:
Sic hominis et ratio
Gelyk dem Fos sik shikket.
Motto to *Reineke.*

If *Reinecke* is nowise a perfect Comic Epos, it has various features of such, and above all, a genuine Epic spirit, which is the rarest feature.

Of the Fable, and its incidents and structure, it is perhaps superfluous to offer any sketch; to most readers the whole may be already familiar. How Noble, King of the Beasts, holding a solemn Court one Whitsuntide, is deafened on all hands with complaints against Reinecke; Hinze the Cat, Lampe the Hare, Isegrim the Wolf, with innumerable others, having suffered from his villany, Isegrim especially, in a point which most keenly touches honour; nay, Chanticleer the Cock (*Henning de Hane*), amid bitterest wail, appearing even with the *corpus delicti*, the body of one of his children, whom that arch-knave has feloniously murdered with intent to eat. How his indignant Majesty thereupon despatches Bruin the Bear to cite the delinquent in the King's name;

how Bruin, inveigled into a Honey-expedition, returns without his errand, without his ears, almost without his life; Hinze the Cat, in a subsequent expedition, faring no better. How at last Reinecke, that he may not have to stand actual siege in his fortress of Malapertus, does appear for trial, and is about to be hanged, but on the gallows-ladder makes a speech unrivalled in forensic eloquence, and saves his life; nay, having incidentally hinted at some Treasures, the hiding-place of which is well known to him, rises into high favour; is permitted to depart on that pious pilgrimage to Rome he has so much at heart, and furnished even with shoes cut from the living hides of Isegrim and Isegrim's much-injured Spouse, his worst enemies. How, the Treasures not making their appearance, but only new misdeeds, he is again haled to judgment; again glozes the general ear with sweetest speeches; at length, being challenged to it, fights Isegrim in knightly tourney, and by the cunningest though the most unchivalrous method, not to be farther specified in polite writing, carries off a complete victory; and having thus, by wager of battle, manifested his innocence, is overloaded with royal favour, created Chancellor, and Pilot to weather the Storm; and so, in universal honour and authority, reaps the fair fruit of his gifts and labours:

> Whereby shall each to wisdom turn,
> Evil eschew and virtue learn,
> Therefore was this same story wrote,
> That is its aim, and other not.
> This Book for little price is sold,
> But image clear of world doth hold;
> Whoso into the world would look,
> My counsel is,—he buy this book.
> So endeth Reynard Fox's story:
> God help us all to heavenly glory!

It has been objected that the Animals in *Reinecke* are not Animals, but men disguised; to which objection, except in so far as grounded on the necessary indubitable fact that this is an Apologue or emblematic Fable, and no Chapter of Natural

History, we cannot in any considerable degree accede. Nay, that very contrast between Object and Effort, where the Passions of men develop themselves on the Interests of animals, and the whole is huddled together in chaotic mockery, is a main charm of the picture. For the rest, we should rather say, these bestial characters were moderately well sustained: the vehement, futile vociferation of Chanticleer; the hysterical promptitude, and earnest profession and protestation of poor Lampe the Hare; the thick-headed ferocity of Isegrim; the sluggish, gluttonous opacity of Bruin; above all, the craft, the tact and inexhaustible knavish adroitness of Reinecke himself, are in strict accuracy of costume. Often also their situations and occupations are bestial enough. What quantities of bacon and other proviant do Isegrim and Reinecke forage; Reinecke contributing the scheme,—for the two were then in partnership,—and Isegrim paying the shot in broken bones! What more characteristic than the fate of Bruin, when ill-counselled, he introduces his stupid head into Rustefill's half-split log; has the wedges whisked away, and stands clutched there, as in a vice, and uselessly roaring; disappointed of honey, sure only of a beating without parallel! Not to forget the Mare, whom, addressing her by the title of Goodwife, with all politeness, Isegrim, sore-pinched with hunger, asks whether she will sell her foal: she answers, that the price is written on her hinder hoof; which document the intending purchaser, being 'an Erfurt graduate,' declares his full ability to read; but finds there no writing, or print,—save only the *print* of six horsenails on his own mauled visage. And abundance of the like; sufficient to excuse our old Epos on this head, or altogether justify it. Another objection, that, namely, which points to the great and excessive coarseness of the work here and there, it cannot so readily turn aside; being indeed rude, oldfashioned, and homespun, apt even to draggle in the mire: neither are its occasional dulness and tediousness to be denied; but only to be set against its frequent terseness and strength, and pardoned as the product

of poor humanity, from whose hands nothing, not even a *Reineke de Fos*, comes perfect.

He who would read, and still understand this old Apologue, must apply to Goethe, whose version, for poetical use, we have found infinitely the best; like some copy of an ancient, bedimmed, half-obliterated woodcut, but new-done on steel, on India-paper, with all manner of graceful yet appropriate appendages. Nevertheless, the old Low-German original has also a certain charm, and simply as the original, would claim some notice. It is reckoned greatly the best performance that was ever brought out in that dialect; interesting, moreover, in a philological point of view, especially to us English; being properly the language of our old Saxon Fatherland; and still curiously like our own, though the two, for some twelve centuries, have had no brotherly communication. One short specimen, with the most verbal translation, we shall insert here, and then have done with *Reinecke*:

De Greving was Reinken broder's söne,
The Badger was Reinke's brother's son,
De sprak do, un was sêr köne.
He spoke there, and was (sore) very (keen) bold.
He forantworde in dem Hove den Fos,
He (for-answered) defended in the Court the Fox,
De dog was sêr falsh un lôs.
That (though) yet was very false and loose.
He sprak to deme Wulve also fôrd:
He spoke to the Wolf so forth:
Here Isegrim, it is ein ôldspräken wôrd,
Master Isegrim, it is an old-spoken word,
Des fyendes mund shaffet selden frôm!
The (fiend's) enemy's mouth (shapeth) bringeth seldom advantage!
So do ji ôk by Reinken, minem ôm.
So do ye (eke) too by Reinke, mine (eme) uncle.
Were he so wol alse ji hyr to Hove,
Were he as well as ye here at Court,
Un stunde he also in des Koninge's love,
And stood he so in the King's favour,
Here Isegrim, alse ji dôt,
Master Isegrim, as ye do,

It sholde ju nigt dünken gôd,
It should you not (think) seem good,
Dat ji en hyr alsus forspräken
That ye him here so forspake
Un de ôlden stükke hyr fôrräken.
And the old tricks here forth-raked.
Men dat kwerde, dat ji Reinken hävven gedân,
But the ill that ye Reinke have done,
Dat late ji al agter stan.
That let ye all (after stand) stand by.
It is nog etliken heren wol kund,
It is yet to some gentlemen well known,
Wo ji mid Reinken maken den ferbund,
How ye with Reinke made (bond) alliance,
Un wolden wären twe like gesellen :
And would be two (like) equal partners :
Dat mok ik dirren heren fortällen.
That mote I these gentlemen forth-tell.
Wente Reinke, myn ôm in wintersnôd,
Since Reinke, mine uncle, in winter's need,
Umme Isegrim's willen, fylna was dôd.
For Isegrim's (will) sake, full-nigh was dead.
Wente it geshag dat ein kwam gefaren,
For it chanced that one came (faring) driving,
De hadde grote fishe up ener karen :
Who had many fishes upon a car :
Isegrim hadde geren der fishe gehaled,
Isegrim had fain the fishes have (haled) got,
Men he hadde nigt, darmid se wörden betaled.
But he had not wherewith they should be (betold) paid.
He bragte minen ôm in de grote nôd,
He brought mine uncle into great (need) straits,
Um sinen willen ging he liggen for dôd,
For his sake went he to (lig) lie for dead,
Regt in den wäg, un stund äventur.
Right in the way, and stood (adventure) chance.
Market, worden em ôk de fishe sûr?
Mark, were him eke the fishes (sour) dear-bought?
Do jenne mid der kare gefaren kwam
When (yond) he with the car driving came
Un minen ôm darsülvest fornem,
And mine uncle (there-self) even there perceived,
Hastigen tôg he syn swërd un snel,

Hastily (took) drew he his sword and (snell) quick,
Un wolde mineme ome torrükken en fel.
And would my uncle (tatter in fell) tear in pieces.
Men he rögede sik nigt klên nog grôt;
But he stirred himself not (little nor great) more or less;
Do mênde he dat he were dôd;
Then (meaned) thought he that he was dead;
He läde ön up de kar, und dayte en to fillen,
He laid him upon the car, and thought him to skin,
Dat wagede he all dorg Isegrim's willen!
That risked he all through Isegrim's will!
Do he fordan begunde to faren,
When he forth-on began to fare,
Wärp Reinke etlike fishe fan der karen,
Cast Reinke some fishes from the car,
Isegrim fan ferne agteona kwam
Isegrim from far after came
Un derre fishe al to sik nam.
And these fishes all to himself took.
Reinke sprang wedder fen der karen;
Reinke sprang again from the car;
Em lüstede to nigt länger to faren.
Him listed not longer to fare.
He hadde ôk gêrne der fishe begërd,
He (had) would have also fain of the fishes required
Men Isegrim hadde se alle fortêrd.
But Isegrim had them all consumed.
He hadde geten dat he wolde barsten,
He had eaten so that he would burst,
Un moste darumme gên torn arsten.
And must thereby go to the doctor.
Do Isegrim der graden nigt en mogte,
As Isegrim the fish-bones not liked,
Der sülven he em ein weinig brogte.
Of these (self) same he him a little brought.

Whereby it would appear, if we are to believe Grimbart the Badger, that Reinecke was not only the cheater in this case, but also the cheatee: however, he makes matters straight again in that other noted fish-expedition, where Isegrim, minded not to steal but to catch fish, and having no fishing-tackle, by Reinecke's advice inserts his tail into the lake, in

winter-season; but before the promised string of trouts, all hooked to one another and to him, will bite,—is frozen in, and left there to his own bitter meditations.

We here take leave of *Reineke de Fos*, and of the whole Æsopic genus, of which it is almost the last, and by far the most remarkable example. The Age of Apologue, like that of Chivalry and Love-singing, is gone; for nothing in this Earth has continuance. If we ask, Where are now our People's-Books? the answer might give room for reflections. Hinrek van Alkmer has passed away, and Dr. Birkbeck has risen in his room. What good and evil lie in that little sentence!—But doubtless the day is coming when what is wanting here will be supplied; when as the Logical, so likewise the Poetical susceptibility and faculty of the people,—their Fancy, Humour, Imagination, wherein lie the main elements of spiritual life,—will no longer be left uncultivated, barren, or bearing only spontaneous thistles, but in new and finer harmony with an improved Understanding, will flourish in new vigour; and in our inward world there will again be a sunny Firmament and verdant Earth, as well as a Pantry and culinary Fire; and men will learn not only to recapitulate and compute, but to worship, to love; in tears or in laughter, hold mystical as well as logical communion with the high and the low of this wondrous Universe; and read, as they should live, with their whole being. Of which glorious consummation there is at all times, seeing these endowments are indestructible, nay, essentially supreme in man, the firmest ulterior certainty, but, for the present, only faint prospects and far-off indications. Time brings Roses!

HISTORIC SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY[1]

[1831]

GERMAN Literature has now for upwards of half a century been making some way in England; yet by no means at a constant rate, rather in capricious flux and reflux,—deluge alternating with desiccation: never would it assume such moderate, reasonable currency, as promised to be useful and lasting. The history of its progress here would illustrate the progress of more important things; would again exemplify what obstacles a new spiritual object, with its mixture of truth and of falsehood, has to encounter from unwise enemies, still more from unwise friends; how dross is mistaken for metal, and common ashes are solemnly labelled as fell poison; how long, in such cases, blind Passion must vociferate before she can awaken Judgment; in short, with what tumult, vicissitude and protracted difficulty, a foreign doctrine adjusts and locates itself among the home-born. Perfect ignorance is quiet, perfect knowledge is quiet; not so the transition from the former to the latter. In a vague, all-exaggerating twilight of wonder, the new has to fight its battle with the old; Hope has to settle accounts with Fear: thus the scales strangely waver; public opinion, which is as yet baseless, fluctuates without limit; periods of foolish admiration and foolish execration must elapse, before that of true inquiry and zeal according to knowledge can begin.

[1] EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 105.—*Historic Survey of German Poetry interspersed with various Translations.* By W. Taylor, of Norwich, 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1830.

Thirty years ago, for example, a person of influence and understanding thought good to emit such a proclamation as the following: 'Those ladies, who take the lead in society, are loudly called upon to act as guardians of the public taste as well as of the public virtue. They are called upon, therefore, to oppose, with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those swarms of Publications now daily issuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other and more fatal arms, are overrunning civilised society. Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on the correct models of the old classic school, see with indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of Chaos and old Night, by distorted and unprincipled Compositions, which, in spite of strong flashes of genius, unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot.'—'The newspapers announce that Schiller's *Tragedy of the Robbers*, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to enlist themselves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now acting in England by persons of quality!'[1]

Whether our fair Amazons, at sound of this alarm-trumpet, drew up in array of war to discomfit these invading Compositions, and snuff-out the lights of that questionable private theatre, we have not learned; and see only that, if so, their campaign was fruitless and needless. Like the old Northern Immigrators, those new Paper Goths marched on resistless whither they were bound; some to honour, some to dishonour, the most to oblivion and the impalpable inane; and no weapon or artillery, not even the glances of bright eyes, but only the omnipotence of Time, could tame and assort them. Thus, Kotzebue's truculent armaments, once so threatening, all turned out to be mere Fantasms and Night-apparitions; and

[1] *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education.* By Hannah More. The Eighth Edition, p. 41.

so rushed onwards, like some Spectre-Hunt, with loud howls indeed, yet hurrying nothing into Chaos but themselves. While, again, Schiller's *Tragedy of the Robbers*, which did not inflame either the young or the old nobility of Germany to rob in the forests of Bohemia, or indeed to do anything, except perhaps yawn a little less, proved equally innocuous in England, and might still be acted without offence, could living individuals, idle enough for that end, be met with here. Nay, this same Schiller, not indeed by *Robbers*, yet by *Wallensteins*, by *Maids of Orleans*, and *Wilhelm Tells*, has actually conquered for himself a fixed dominion among us, which is yearly widening; round which other German kings, of less intrinsic prowess, and of greater, are likewise erecting thrones. And yet, as we perceive, civilised society still stands in its place; and the public taste, as well as the public virtue, live on, though languidly, as before. For, in fine, it has become manifest that the old Cimmerian Forest is now quite felled and tilled; that the true Children of Night, whom we have to dread, dwell not on the banks of the Danube, but nearer hand.

Could we take our progress in knowledge of German Literature since that diatribe was written, as any measure of our progress in the science of Criticism, above all, in the grand science of national Tolerance, there were some reason for satisfaction. With regard to Germany itself, whether we yet stand on the right footing, and know at last how we are to live in profitable neighbourhood and intercourse with that country; or whether the present is but one other of those capricious tides, which also will have its reflux, may seem doubtful: meanwhile, clearly enough, a rapidly growing favour for German Literature comes to light; which favour too is the more hopeful as it now grounds itself on better knowledge, on direct study and judgment. Our knowledge is better, if only because more general. Within the last ten years, independent readers of German have multiplied perhaps a hundredfold; so that now this acquirement is almost ex-

pected as a natural item in liberal education. Hence, in a great number of minds, some immediate personal insight into the deeper significance of German Intellect and Art;—everywhere, at least a feeling that it has some such significance. With independent readers, moreover, the writer ceases to be independent, which of itself is a considerable step. Our British Translators, for instance, have long been unparalleled in modern literature, and, like their country, 'the envy of surrounding nations'; but now there are symptoms that, even in the remote German province, they must no longer range quite at will; that the butchering of a *Faust* will henceforth be accounted literary homicide, and practitioners of that quality must operate on the dead subject only. While there are Klingemanns and Claurens in such abundance, let no merely ambitious, or merely hungry Interpreter fasten on Goethes and Schillers.

Remark too, with satisfaction, how the old-established British Critic now feels that it has become unsafe to speak delirium on this subject; wherefore he prudently restricts himself to one of two courses: either to acquire some understanding of it, or, which is the still surer course, altogether to hold his peace. Hence freedom from much babble that was wont to be oppressive: probably no watchhorn with such a note as that of Mrs. More's can again be sounded, by male or female Dogberry, in these Islands. Again, there is no one of our younger, more vigorous Periodicals, but has its German craftsman, gleaning what he can: we have seen Jean Paul quoted in English Newspapers. Nor, among the signs of improvement, at least of extended curiosity, let us omit our British Foreign Reviews, a sort of merchantmen that regularly visit the Continental, especially the German Ports, and bring back such ware as luck yields them, with the hope of better. Last, not least among our evidences of Philo-Germanism, here is a whole *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, in three sufficient octavos; and this not merely in the eulogistic and recommendatory vein, but proceeding in

the way of criticism, and indifferent, impartial narrative: a man of known character, of talent, experience, penetration, judges that the English public is prepared for such a service, and likely to reward it.

These are appearances, which, as advocates for the friendly approximation of all men and all peoples, and the readiest possible interchange of whatever each produces of advantage to the others, we must witness gladly. Free literary intercourse with other nations, what is it but an extended Freedom of the Press; a liberty to read (in spite of Ignorance, of Prejudice, which is the worst of Censors) what our foreign teachers also have printed for us? Ultimately, therefore, a liberty to speak and to hear, were it with men of all countries and of all times; to use, in utmost compass, those precious natural organs, by which not Knowledge only but mutual Affection is chiefly generated among mankind! It is a natural wish in man to know his fellow-passengers in this strange Ship, or Planet, on this strange Life-voyage: neither need his curiosity restrict itself to the cabin where he himself chances to lodge; but may extend to all accessible departments of the vessel. In all he will find mysterious beings, of Wants and Endeavours like his own; in all he will find Men; with these let him comfort and manifoldly instruct himself. As to German Literature, in particular, which professes to be not only new, but original, and rich in curious information for us; which claims, moreover, nothing that we have not granted to the French, Italian, Spanish, and in a less degree to far meaner literatures, we are gratified to see that such claims can no longer be resisted. In the present fallow state of our English Literature, when no Poet cultivates his own poetic field, but all are harnessed into Editorial teams, and ploughing in concert, for Useful Knowledge, or Bibliopolic Profit, we regard this renewal of our intercourse with poetic Germany, after twenty years of languor or suspension, as among the most remarkable and even promising features of our recent intellectual history. In the

absence of better tendencies, let this, which is no idle, but in some points of view a deep and earnest one, be encouraged. For ourselves, in the midst of so many louder and more exciting interests, we feel it a kind of duty to cast some glances now and then on this little stiller interest: since the matter is once for all to be inquired into, sound notions on it should be furthered, unsound ones cannot be too speedily corrected. It is on such grounds that we have taken up this *Historic Survey.*

Mr. Taylor is so considerable a person, that no Book deliberately published by him, on any subject, can be without weight. On German Poetry, such is the actual state of public information and curiosity, his guidance will be sure to lead or mislead a numerous class of inquirers. We are therefore called on to examine him with more than usual strictness and minuteness. The Press, in these times, has become so active; Literature, what is still called Literature, has so dilated in volume, and diminished in density, that the very Reviewer feels at a nonplus, and has ceased to review. Why thoughtfully examine what was written without thought; or note faults and merits, where there is neither fault nor merit? From a Nonentity, embodied, with innocent deception, in foolscap and printer's ink, and named Book; from the common wind of Talk, even when it is conserved by such mechanism, for days, in the shape of Froth,—how shall the hapless Reviewer filter aught in that once so profitable colander of his? He has ceased, as we said, to attempt the impossible,—cannot review, but only discourse; he dismisses his too unproductive Author, generally with civil words, not to quarrel needlessly with a fellow-creature; and must try, as he best may, to grind from his own poor garner. Authors long looked with an evil, envious eye on the Reviewer, and strove often to blow-out his light, which only burnt the clearer for such blasts; but now, cunningly altering their tactics, they have extinguished it by want of oil. Unless for

some unforeseen change of affairs, or some new-contrived machinery, of which there is yet no trace, the trade of the Reviewer is well-nigh done.

The happier are we that Mr. Taylor's Book is of the old stamp, and has substance in it for our uses. If no honour, there will be no disgrace, in having carefully examined it; which service, indeed, is due to our readers, not without curiosity in this matter, as well as to the Author. In so far as he seems a safe guide, and brings true tidings from the promised land, let us proclaim that fact, and recommend him to all pilgrims: if, on the other hand, his tidings are false, let us hasten to make this also known; that the German Canaan suffer not, in the eyes of the fainthearted, by spurious samples of its produce and reports of bloodthirsty sons of Anak dwelling there, which this harbinger and spy brings out of it. In either case, we may hope, our Author, who loves the Germans in his way, and would have his countrymen brought into closer acquaintance with them, will feel that, in purpose at least, we are coöperating with him.

First, then, be it admitted without hesitation, that Mr. Taylor, in respect of general talent and acquirement, takes his place above all our expositors of German things; that his Book is greatly the most important we yet have on this subject. Here are upwards of fourteen hundred solid pages of commentary, narrative and translation, submitted to the English reader; numerous statements and personages, hitherto unheard of, or vaguely heard of, stand here in fixed shape; there is, if no map of intellectual Germany, some first attempt at such. Farther, we are to state that our Author is a zealous, earnest man: no hollow dilettante hunting after shadows, and prating he knows not what; but a substantial, distinct, remarkably decisive man; has his own opinion on many subjects, and can express it adequately. We should say, precision of idea was a striking quality of his: no vague transcendentalism, or mysticism of any kind; nothing but what is measurable and tangible, and has a meaning which he

that runs may read, is to be apprehended here. He is a man of much classical and other reading; of much singular reflection; stands on his own basis, quiescent yet immovable: a certain rugged vigour of natural power, interesting even in its distortions, is everywhere manifest. Lastly, we venture to assign him the rare merit of honesty: he speaks out in plain English what is in him; seems heartily convinced of his own doctrines, and preaches them because they are his own; not for the sake of sale, but of truth; at worst, for the sake of making proselytes.

On the strength of which properties, we reckon that this *Historic Survey* may, under certain conditions, be useful and acceptable to two classes. First, to incipient students of German Literature in the original; who in any History of their subject, even in a bare catalogue, will find help; though for that class, unfortunately, Mr. Taylor's help is much diminished in value by several circumstances; by this one, were there no other, that he nowhere cites any authority: the path he has opened may be the true or the false one; for farther researches and lateral surveys there is no direction or indication. But, secondly, we reckon that this Book may be welcome to many of the much larger miscellaneous class, who read less for any specific object than for the sake of reading; to whom any book that will, either in the way of contradiction or confirmation, by new wisdom or new perversion of wisdom, stir-up the stagnant inner man, is a windfall; the rather if it bring some historic tidings also, fit for remembering, and repeating; above all, if, as in this case, the style with many singularities have some striking merits, and so the book be a light exercise, even an entertainment.

To such praise and utility the Work is justly entitled; but this is not all it pretends to; and more cannot without many limitations be conceded it. Unluckily the *Historic Survey* is not what it should be, but only what it would be. Our Author hastens to correct in his Preface any false hopes his Titlepage may have excited: 'A complete History of

German Poetry,' it seems, 'is hardly within reach of his local command of library: so comprehensive an undertaking would require another residence in a country from which he has now been separated more than forty years:' and which various considerations render it unadvisable to revisit. Nevertheless, 'having long been in the practice of importing the productions of its fine literature,' and of working in that material, as critic, biographer and translator, for more than one 'periodic publication of this country,' he has now composed 'introductory and connective sections,' filled-up deficiencies, retrenched superfluities; and so, collecting and remodelling those 'successive contributions,' cements them together into the 'new and entire work' here offered to the public. 'With fragments,' he concludes, 'long since hewn, as it were, and sculptured, I attempt to construct an English Temple of Fame to the memory of those German Poets.'

There is no doubt but a Complete History of German Poetry exceeds any local or universal command of books which a British man can at this day enjoy; and, farther, presents obstacles of an infinitely more serious character than this. A History of German, or of any national Poetry, would form, taken in its complete sense, one of the most arduous enterprises any writer could engage in. Poetry, were it the rudest, so it be sincere, is the attempt which man makes to render his existence harmonious, the utmost he can do for that end: it springs therefore from his whole feelings, opinions, activity, and takes its character from these. It may be called the music of his whole manner of being; and, historically considered, is the test how far Music, or Freedom, existed therein; how far the feeling of Love, of Beauty and Dignity, could be elicited from that peculiar situation of his, and from the views he there had of Life and Nature, of the Universe, internal and external. Hence, in any measure to understand the Poetry, to estimate its worth and historical meaning, we ask as a quite fundamental inquiry: What that situation was? Thus the History of a nation's Poetry is the

essence of its History, political, economic, scientific, religious. With all these the complete Historian of a national Poetry will be familiar; the national physiognomy, in its finest traits, and through its successive stages of growth, will be clear to him: he will discern the grand spiritual Tendency of each period, what was the highest Aim and Enthusiasm of mankind in each, and how one epoch naturally evolved itself from the other. He has to record the highest Aim of a nation, in its successive directions and developments; for by this the Poetry of the nation modulates itself; this *is* the Poetry of the nation.

Such were the primary essence of a true History of Poetry; the living principle round which all detached facts and phenomena, all separate characters of Poems and Poets, would fashion themselves into a coherent whole, if they are by any means to cohere. To accomplish such a work for any Literature would require not only all outward aids, but an excellent inward faculty: all telescopes and observatories were of no avail, without the seeing eye and the understanding heart.

Doubtless, as matters stand, such models remain in great part ideal; the stinted result of actual practice must not be too rigidly tried by them. In our language, we have yet no example of such a performance. Neither elsewhere, except perhaps in the well-meant, but altogether ineffectual, attempt of Denina, among the Italians, and in some detached, though far more successful, sketches by German writers, is there any that we know of. To expect an English History of German Literature in this style were especially unreasonable; where not only the man to write it, but the people to read and enjoy it are wanting. Some *Historic Survey*, wherein such an ideal standard, if not attained, if not approached, might be faithfully kept in view, and endeavoured after, would suffice us. Neither need such a Survey, even as a British Surveyor might execute it, be deficient in striking objects, and views of a general interest. There is the spectacle of a great people,

closely related to us in blood, language, character, advancing through fifteen centuries of culture; with the eras and changes that have distinguished the like career in other nations. Nay, perhaps, the intellectual history of the Germans is not without peculiar attraction, on two grounds: first, that they are a separate unmixed people; that in them one of the two grand stem-tribes, from which all modern European countries derive their population and speech, is seen growing up distinct, and in several particulars following its own course: secondly, that by accident and by desert, the Germans have more than once been found playing the highest part in European culture; at more than one era the grand Tendencies of Europe have first embodied themselves into action in Germany, the main battle between the New and the Old has been fought and gained there. We mention only the Swiss Revolt, and Luther's Reformation. The Germans have not indeed so many classical works to exhibit as some other nations; a Shakspeare, a Dante, has not yet been recognised among them; nevertheless, they too have had their Teachers and inspired Singers; and in regard to popular Mythology, traditionary possessions and spirit, what we may call the *inarticulate* Poetry of a nation, and what is the element of its spoken or written Poetry, they will be found superior to any other modern people.

The Historic Surveyor of German Poetry will observe a remarkable nation struggling out of Paganism; fragments of that stern Superstition, saved from the general wreck, and still, amid the new order of things, carrying back our view, in faint reflexes, into the dim primeval time. By slow degrees the chaos of the Northern Immigrations settles into a new and fairer world; arts advance; little by little a fund of Knowledge, of Power over Nature, is accumulated by man; feeble glimmerings, even of a higher knowledge, of a poetic, break forth; till at length in the *Swabian Era*, as it is named, a blaze of true though simple Poetry bursts over Germany, more splendid, we might say, than the Troubadour

Period of any other nation; for that famous *Nibelungen Song*, produced, at least ultimately fashioned in those times, and still so significant in these, is altogether without parallel elsewhere.

To this period, the essence of which was young Wonder, and an enthusiasm for which Chivalry was still the fit exponent, there succeeds, as was natural, a period of Inquiry, a Didactic period; wherein, among the Germans, as elsewhere, many a Hugo von Trimberg delivers wise saws, and moral apophthegms, to the general edification: later, a Town-clerk of Strasburg sees his *Ship of Fools* translated into all living languages, twice into Latin, and read by Kings; the Apologue of *Reynard the Fox* gathering itself together, from sources remote and near, assumes its Low-German vesture, and becomes the darling of high and low; nay, still lives with us in rude genial vigour, as one of the most remarkable indigenous productions of the Middle Ages. Nor is acted poetry of this kind wanting; the Spirit of Inquiry translates itself into Deeds which are poetical, as well as into words: already at the opening of the fourteenth century, Germany witnesses the first assertion of political right, the first vindication of Man against Nobleman; in the early history of the German Swiss. And again, two centuries later, the first assertion of intellectual right, the first vindication of Man against Clergyman; in the history of Luther's Reformation. Meanwhile the Press has begun its incalculable task; the indigenous Fiction of the Germans, what we have called their inarticulate Poetry, issues in innumerable *Volksbücher* (People's-Books), the progeny and kindred of which still live in all European countries: the People have their Tragedy and their Comedy; *Tyll Eulenspiegel* shakes every diaphragm with laughter; the rudest heart quails with awe at the wild mythus of *Faust*.

With Luther, however, the Didactic Tendency has reached its poetic acme; and now we must see it assume a prosaic character, and Poetry for a long while decline. The Spirit of Inquiry, of Criticism, is pushed beyond the limits, or too

exclusively cultivated: what had done so much, is supposed capable of doing all; Understanding is alone listened to, while Fancy and Imagination languish inactive, or are forcibly stifled; and all poetic culture gradually dies away. As if with the high resolute genius, and noble achievements, of its Luthers and Huttens, the genius of the country had exhausted itself, we behold generation after generation of mere Prosaists succeed these high Psalmists. Science indeed advances, practical manipulation in all kinds improves; Germany has its Copernics, Hevels, Guerickes, Keplers; later, a Leibnitz opens the path of true Logic, and teaches the mysteries of Figure and Number: but the finer Education of mankind seems at a stand. Instead of Poetic recognition and worship, we have stolid Theologic controversy, or still shallower Freethinking; pedantry, servility, mode-hunting, every species of Idolatry and Affectation holds sway. The World has lost its beauty, Life its infinite majesty, as if the Author of it were no longer divine: instead of admiration and creation of the True, there is at best criticism and denial of the False; to Luther there has succeeded Thomasius. In this era, so unpoetical for all Europe, Germany, torn in pieces by a Thirty-Years War, and its consequences, is preëminently prosaic; its few Singers are feeble echoes of foreign models little better than themselves. No Shakspeare, no Milton appears there; such indeed would have appeared earlier, if at all, in the current of German history: but instead, they have only at best Opitzes, Flemmings, Logaus, as we had our Queen-Anne Wits; or, in their Lohensteins, Gryphs, Hoffmannswaldaus, though in inverse order, an unintentional parody of our Drydens and Lees.

Nevertheless from every moral death there is a new birth; in this wondrous course of his, man may indeed linger, but cannot retrograde or stand still. In the middle of last century, from among Parisian Erotics, rickety Sentimentalism, Court aperies, and hollow Dulness striving in all hopeless

courses, we behold the giant spirit of Germany awaken as from long slumber; shake away these worthless fetters, and by its Lessings and Klopstocks, announce, in true German dialect, that the Germans also are men. Singular enough in its circumstances was this resuscitation; the work as of a 'spirit on the waters,' a movement agitating the great popular mass; for it was favoured by no court or king: all sovereignties, even the pettiest, had abandoned their native Literature, their native language, as if to irreclaimable barbarism. The greatest king produced in Germany since Barbarossa's time, Frederick the Second, looked coldly on the native endeavour, and saw no hope but in aid from France. However, the native endeavour prospered without aid: Lessing's announcement did not die away with him, but took clearer utterance, and more inspired modulation from his followers; in whose works it now speaks, not to Germany alone, but to the whole world. The results of this last Period of German Literature are of deep significance, the depth of which is perhaps but now becoming visible. Here too, it may be, as in other cases, the Want of the Age has first taken voice and shape in Germany; that change from Negation to Affirmation, from Destruction to Re-construction, for which all thinkers in every country are now prepared, is perhaps already in action there. In the nobler Literature of the Germans, say some, lie the rudiments of a new spiritual era, which it is for this and for succeeding generations to work out and realise. The ancient creative Inspiration, it would seem, is still possible in these ages; at a time when Scepticism, Frivolity, Sensuality, had withered Life into a sand-desert, and our gayest prospect was but the *false mirage*, and even our Byrons could utter but a death-song or despairing howl, the Moses'-wand has again struck from that Horeb refreshing streams, towards which the better spirits of all nations are hastening, if not to drink, yet wistfully and hopefully to examine. If the older Literary History of Germany has the common attractions, which in

a greater or a less degree belong to the successive epochs of other such Histories; its newer Literature, and the historical delineation of this, has an interest such as belongs to no other.

It is somewhat in this way, as appears to us, that the growth of German Poetry must be construed and represented by the historian: these are the general phenomena and vicissitudes, which, if elucidated by proper individual instances, by specimens fitly chosen, presented in natural sequence, and worked by philosophy into union, would make a valuable book; on any and all of which the observations and researches of so able an inquirer as Mr. Taylor would have been welcome. Sorry are we to declare that of all this, which constitutes the essence of anything calling itself *Historic Survey*, there is scarcely a vestige in the Book before us. The question, What is the German mind; what is the culture of the German mind; what course has Germany followed in that matter; what are its national characteristics as manifested therein? appears not to have presented itself to the Author's thought. No theorem of Germany and its intellectual progress, not even a false one, has he been at pains to construct for himself. We believe, it is impossible for the most assiduous reader to gather from these three volumes any portraiture of the national mind of Germany, not to say in its successive phases and the historical sequence of these, but in any one phase or condition. The Work is made up of critical, biographical, bibliographical dissertations, and notices concerning this and the other individual poet; interspersed with large masses of translation; and except that all these are strung together in the order of time, has no historical feature whatever. Many literary lives as we read, the nature of literary life in Germany, what sort of moral, economical, intellectual element it is that a German writer lives in and works in,—will nowhere manifest itself. Indeed, far from depicting Germany, scarcely on more than one or two occasions does our Author even look at it, or so much as remind us that it were capable

of being depicted. On these rare occasions too, we are treated with such philosophic insight as the following: 'The Germans are not an imitative, but they are a listening people: they can do nothing without directions, and anything with them. As soon as Gottsched's rules for writing German correctly had made their appearance, everybody began to write German.' Or we have theoretic hints, resting on no basis, about some new tribunal of taste which at one time had formed itself 'in the mess-rooms of the Prussian officers'!

In a word, the 'connecting sections,' or indeed by what alchymy such a congeries could be connected into a *Historic Survey* have not become plain to us. Considerable part of it consists of quite detached little Notices, mostly of altogether insignificant men; heaped together as separate fragments; fit, had they been unexceptionable in other respects, for a Biographical Dictionary, but nowise for a *Historic Survey*. Then we have dense masses of Translation, sometimes good, but seldom of the characteristic pieces; an entire *Iphigenia*, an entire *Nathan the Wise*; nay, worse, a *Sequel to Nathan*, which when we have conscientiously struggled to peruse, the Author turns round, without any apparent smile, and tells us that it is by a nameless writer, and worth nothing. Not only Mr. Taylor's own Translations, which are generally good, but contributions from a whole body of labourers in that department are given: for example, near sixty pages, very ill rendered by a Miss Plumtre, of a *Life of Kotzebue*, concerning whom, or whose life, death or burial, there is now no curiosity extant among men. If in that 'English Temple of Fame,' with its hewn and sculptured stones, those Biographical-Dictionary fragments and fractions are so much dry *rubble-work* of whinstone, is not this quite despicable *Autobiography of Kotzebue* a rood or two of mere *turf*; which, as ready-cut, our architect, to make up measure, has packed in among his marble ashlar; whereby the whole wall will the sooner bulge?

But indeed, generally speaking, symmetry is not one of his architectural rules. Thus in Volume First we have a long story translated from a German Magazine, about certain antique Hyperborean *Baresarks*, amusing enough, but with no more reference to Germany than to England; while in return the *Nibelungen Lied* is despatched in something less than one line, and comes no more to light. Tyll Eulenspiegel, who was not an 'anonymous Satire, entitled the *Mirror of Owls*,' but a real flesh-and-blood hero of that name, whose tombstone is standing to this day near Lübeck, has some four lines for his share; *Reineke de Fos* about as many, which also are inaccurate. Again, if Wieland have his half-volume, and poor Ernest Schulze, poor Zacharias Werner, and numerous other poor men, each his chapter; Luther also has his two sentences, and is in these weighed against — Dr. Isaac Watts. Ulrich Hutten does not occur here; Hans Sachs and his Master-singers escape notice, or even do worse; the poetry of the Reformation is not alluded to. The name of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter appears not to be known to Mr. Taylor; or, if want of rhyme was to be the test of a prosaist, how comes Salomon Gesner here? Stranger still, Ludwig Tieck is not once mentioned; neither is Novalis; neither is Maler Müller. But why dwell on these omissions and commissions? Is not all included in this one well-nigh incredible fact, that one of the largest articles in the Book, a tenth part of the whole *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, treats of that delectable genius, August von Kotzebue?

The truth is, this *Historic Survey* has not anything historical in it; but is a mere aggregate of Dissertations, Translations, Notices and Notes, bound together indeed by the circumstance that they are all about German Poetry, 'about it and about it'; also by the sequence of time, and still more strongly by the Bookbinder's pack-thread; but by no other sufficient tie whatever. The authentic title, were not some mercantile varnish allowable in such cases, might be: 'General Jail-delivery of all Publications and Manu-

scripts, original or translated, composed or borrowed, on the subject of German Poetry; by ' etc.

To such Jail-delivery, at least when it is from the prison of Mr. Taylor's Desk at Norwich, and relates to a subject in the actual predicament of German Poetry among us, we have no fundamental objection: and for the name, now that it is explained, there is nothing in a name; a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. However, even in this lower and lowest point of view, the *Historic Survey* is liable to grave objections; its worth is of no unmixed character. We mentioned that Mr. Taylor did not often cite authorities: for which doubtless he may have his reasons. If it be not from French Prefaces, and the *Biographie Universelle*, and other the like sources, we confess ourselves altogether at a loss to divine whence any reasonable individual gathered such notices as these. Books indeed are scarce; but the most untoward situation may command Wachler's *Vorlesungen*, Horn's *Poesie und Beredsamkeit*, Meister's *Characteristiken*, Koch's *Compendium*, or some of the thousand-and-one compilations of that sort, numerous and accurate in German, more than in any other literature: at all events, Jördens's *Lexicon Deutscher Dichter und Prosaisten*, and the world-renowned Leipzig *Conversations-Lexicon*. No one of these appears to have been in Mr. Taylor's possession;—Bouterwek alone, and him he seems to have consulted perfunctorily. A certain proportion of errors in such a work is pardonable and unavoidable: scarcely so the proportion observed here. The *Historic Survey* abounds with errors, perhaps beyond any book it has ever been our lot to review.

Of these indeed many are harmless enough: as, for instance, where we learn that Görres was born in 1804 (not in 1776): though in that case he must have published his *Shah-Nameh* at the age of three years: or where it is said that Werner's epitaph ' begs Mary Magdalene to pray for his soul,' which it does not do, if indeed any one cared what it did. Some are of a quite mysterious nature; either impregnated with a wit

which continues obstinately latent, or indicating that, in spite of Railways and Newspapers, some portions of this Island are still singularly impermeable. For example: 'It (*Götz von Berlichingen*) was admirably translated into English in 1799, at Edinburgh, by *William* Scott, Advocate; no doubt, the same person who, under the poetical but assumed name of *Walter*, has since become the most extensively popular of the British writers.' — Others, again, are the fruit of a more culpable ignorance; as when we hear that Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* is literally meant to be a fictitious narrative, and no genuine Biography; that his *Stella* ends quietly in Bigamy (to Mr. Taylor's satisfaction), which, however the French translation may run, in the original it certainly does not. Mr. Taylor likewise complains that his copy of *Faust* is incomplete: so, we grieve to state, is ours. Still worse is it when speaking of distinguished men, who probably have been at pains to veil their sentiments on certain subjects, our Author takes it upon him to lift such veil, and with perfect composure pronounces this to be a Deist, that a Pantheist, that other an Atheist, often without any due foundation. It is quite erroneous, for example, to describe Schiller by any such unhappy term as that of Deist: it is very particularly erroneous to say that Goethe anywhere 'avows himself an Atheist,' that he 'is a Pantheist';—indeed, that he is, was, or is like to be any *ist* to which Mr. Taylor would attach just meaning.

But on the whole, what struck us most in these errors is their surprising number. In the way of our calling, we at first took pencil, with intent to mark such transgressions; but soon found it too appalling a task, and so laid aside our black-lead and our art (*cæstus artemque*). Happily, however, a little natural invention, assisted by some tincture of arithmetic, came to our aid. Six pages, studied for that end, we did mark; finding therein thirteen errors: the pages are 167 to 173 of Volume Third, and still in our copy have their marginal stigmas, which can be vindicated before a jury of

Authors. Now if 6 give 13, who sees not that 1455, the entire number of pages, will give 3152 and a fraction? Or, allowing for Translations, which are freer from errors, and for philosophical Discussions, wherein the errors are of another sort; nay, granting with a perhaps unwarranted liberality, that these six pages may yield too high an average, which we know not that they do,—may not, in round numbers, Fifteen Hundred be given as the approximate amount, not of errors indeed, yet of mistakes and misstatements, in these three octavos?

Of errors in doctrine, false critical judgments and all sorts of philosophical hallucination, the number, more difficult to ascertain, is also unfortunately great. Considered, indeed, as in any measure a picture of what is remarkable in German Poetry, this *Historic Survey* is one great Error. We have to object to Mr. Taylor on all grounds; that his views are often partial and inadequate, sometimes quite false and imaginary; that the highest productions of German Literature, those works in which properly its characteristic and chief worth lie, are still as a sealed book to him; or what is worse, an open book that he will not read, but pronounces to be filled with blank paper. From a man of such intellectual vigour, who has studied his subject so long, we should not have expected such a failure.

Perhaps the main principle of it may be stated, if not accounted for, in this one circumstance, that the *Historic Survey*, like its Author, stands separated from Germany by more than forty years.' During this time Germany has been making unexampled progress; while our Author has either advanced in the other direction, or continued quite stationary. Forty years, it is true, make no difference in a classical Poem; yet much in the readers of that Poem, and its position towards these. Forty years are but a small period in some Histories, but in the history of German Literature, the most rapidly extending, incessantly fluctuating object even in the spiritual world, they make a great period.

In Germany, within these forty years, how much has been united, how much has fallen asunder! Kant has superseded Wolf; Fichte, Kant; Schelling, Fichte; and now, it seems, Hegel is bent on superseding Schelling. Baumgarten has given place to Schlegel; the *Deutsche Bibliothek* to the Berlin *Hermes*: Lessing still towers in the distance like an Earth-born Atlas; but in the poetical Heaven, Wieland and Klopstock burn fainter, as new and more radiant luminaries have arisen. Within the last forty years, German Literature has become national, idiomatic, distinct from all others; by its productions during that period, it is either something or nothing.

Nevertheless it is still at the distance of forty years, sometimes we think it must be fifty, that Mr. Taylor stands. 'The fine Literature of Germany,' no doubt he has 'imported'; yet only with the eyes of 1780 does he read it. Thus Sulzer's *Universal Theory* continues still to be his road-book to the temple of German taste; almost as if the German critic should undertake to measure *Waverley* and *Manfred* by the scale of Blair's *Lectures*. Sulzer was an estimable man, who did good service in his day; but about forty years ago sank into a repose, from which it would now be impossible to rouse him. The superannuation of Sulzer appears not once to be suspected by our Author; as indeed little of all the great work that has been done or undone in Literary Germany, within that period, has become clear to him. The far-famed *Xenien* of Schiller's *Musenalmanach* are once mentioned, in some half-dozen lines, wherein also there are more than half-a-dozen inaccuracies, and one rather egregious error. Of the results that followed from these *Xenien*; of Tieck, Wackenroder, the two Schlegels and Novalis, whose critical Union, and its works, filled all Germany with tumult, discussion, and at length with new conviction, no whisper transpires here. The *New School*, with all that it taught, untaught and mistaught, is not so much as alluded to. Schiller and Goethe, with all the poetic world they created, remain invisible, or dimly seen: Kant is a sort of Political

Reformer. It must be stated with all distinctness, that of the newer and higher German Literature, no reader will obtain the smallest understanding from these Volumes.

Indeed, quite apart from his inacquaintance with actual Germany, there is that in the structure or habit of Mr. Taylor's mind which singularly unfits him for judging of such matters well. We must complain that he reads German Poetry, from first to last, with English eyes; will not accommodate himself to the spirit of the Literature he is investigating, and do his utmost, by loving endeavour, to win its secret from it; but plunges in headlong, and silently assuming that all this was written for him and for his objects, makes short work with it, and innumerable false conclusions. It is sad to see an honest traveller confidently gauging all foreign objects with a measure that will not mete them; trying German Sacred Oaks by their fitness for British shipbuilding; walking from Dan to Beersheba, and finding so little that he did not bring with him. This, we are too well aware, is the commonest of all errors, both with vulgar readers and with vulgar critics; but from Mr. Taylor we had expected something better; nay, let us confess, he himself now and then seems to attempt something better, but too imperfectly succeeds in it.

The truth is, Mr. Taylor, though a man of talent, as we have often admitted, and as the world well knows, though a downright, independent and to all appearance most praiseworthy man, is one of the most peculiar critics to be found in our times. As we construe him from these Volumes, the basis of his nature seems to be Polemical; his whole view of the world, of its Poetry, and whatever else it holds, has a militant character. According to this philosophy, the whole duty of man, it would almost appear, is to lay aside the opinion of his grandfather. Doubtless, it is natural, it is indispensable, for a man to lay aside the opinion of his grandfather, when it will no longer hold together on him; but we had imagined that the great and infinitely harder duty was: To turn the

opinion that does hold together to some account. However, it is not in receiving the New, and creating good with it, but solely in pulling to pieces the Old, that Mr. Taylor will have us employed. Often, in the course of these pages, might the British reader sorrowfully exclaim: "Alas! is this the year of grace 1831, and are we still *here?* Armed with the hatchet and tinder-box; still no symptom of the sower's sheet and plough?" These latter, for our Author, are implements of the dark ages; the ground is full of thistles and jungle; cut down and spare not. A singular aversion to Priests, something like a natural horror and hydrophobia, gives him no rest night nor day; the gist of all his speculations is to drive down more or less effectual palisades against that class of persons; nothing that he does but they interfere with or threaten: the first question he asks of every passer-by, be it German Poet, Philosopher, Farce-writer, is: "Arian or Trinitarian? Wilt thou help me, or not?" Long as he has now laboured, and though calling himself Philosopher, Mr. Taylor has not yet succeeded in sweeping his arena clear; but still painfully struggles in the questions of Naturalism and Supernaturalism, Liberalism and Servilism.

Agitated by this zeal, with its fitful hope and fear, it is that he goes through Germany; scenting-out Infidelity with the nose of an ancient Heresy-hunter, though for opposite purposes; and, like a recruiting-sergeant, beating aloud for recruits; nay, where in any corner he can spy a tall man, clutching at him, to crimp him or impress him. Goethe's and Schiller's creed we saw specified above; those of Lessing and Herder are scarcely less edifying; but take rather this sagacious exposition of Kant's Philosophy:

'The Alexandrian writings do not differ so widely as is commonly apprehended from those of the Königsberg School; for they abound with passages, which, while they seem to flatter the popular credulity, resolve into allegory the stories of the gods, and into an illustrative personification the soul of the world; thus insinuating, to the more alert and penetrating, the speculative rejection of opinions with which they are encouraged and commanded in action to comply. With analogous spirit,

Professor Kant studiously introduces a distinction between Practical and Theoretical Reason; and while he teaches that rational conduct will indulge the hypothesis of a God, a revelation, and a future state (this, we presume, is meant by calling them *inferences of Practical Reason*), he pretends that Theoretical Reason can adduce no one satisfactory argument in their behalf: so that his morality amounts to a defence of the old adage, "Think with the wise, and act with the vulgar"; a plan of behaviour which secures to the vulgar an ultimate victory over the wise. * * * Philosophy is to be withdrawn within a narrower circle of the initiated; and these must be induced to conspire in favouring a vulgar superstition. This can best be accomplished by enveloping with enigmatic jargon the topics of discussion; by employing a cloudy phraseology, which may intercept from below the war-whoop of impiety, and from above the evulgation of infidelity; by contriving a kind of "cipher of illuminism," in which public discussions of the most critical nature can be carried on from the press, without alarming the prejudices of the people, or exciting the precautions of the magistrate. Such a cipher, in the hands of an adept, is the dialect of Kant. Add to this the notorious Gallicanism of his opinions, which must endear him to the patriotism of the philosophers of the Lyceum; and it will appear probable that the reception of his forms of syllogising should extend from Germany to France; should completely and exclusively establish itself on the Continent; entomb with the reasonings the Reason of the modern world; and form the tasteless fretwork which seems about to convert the halls of liberal Philosophy into churches of mystical Supernaturalism.'

These are indeed fearful symptoms, and enough to quicken the diligence of any recruiting officer that has the good cause at heart. Reasonably may such officer, beleaguered with 'witchcraft and demonology, trinitarianism, intolerance,' and a considerable list of *et-ceteras*, and still seeing no hearty followers of his flag, but a mere Falstaff regiment, smite upon his thigh, and, in moments of despondency, lament that Christianity had ever entered, or as we here have it, 'intruded' into Europe at all; that, at least, some small slip of heathendom, 'Scandinavia, for instance,' had not been 'left to its natural course, unmisguided by ecclesiastical missionaries and monastic institutions. Many superstitions, which have fatigued the credulity, clouded the intellect and impaired the security of man, and which, alas, but too naturally followed in the train of the Sacred Books, would there, perhaps,

never have struck root; and in one corner of the world, the inquiries of reason might have found an earlier asylum, and asserted a less circumscribed range.' Nevertheless, there is still hope, preponderating hope. 'The general tendency of the German school,' it would appear, could we but believe such tidings, 'is to teach French opinions in English forms.' Philosophy can now look down with some approving glances on Socinianism. Nay, the literature of Germany, 'very liberal and tolerant,' is gradually overflowing, even into the Slavonian nations, 'and will found, in new languages and climates, those latest inferences of a corrupt but instructed refinement, which are likely to rebuild the morality of the Ancients on the ruins of Christian Puritanism.'

Such retrospections and prospections bring to mind an absurd rumour which, confounding our Author with his namesake, the celebrated Translator of Plato and Aristotle, represented him as being engaged in the repair and re-establishment of the Pagan Religion. For such rumour, we are happy to state, there is not and was not the slightest foundation. Wieland may, indeed, at one time, have put some whims into his disciple's head; but Mr. Taylor is too solid a man to embark in speculations of that nature. Prophetic day-dreams are not practical projects; at all events, as we here see, it is not the old Pagan gods that we are to bring back, but only the ancient Pagan morality, a refined and reformed Paganism;—as some middle-aged householder, if distressed by tax-gatherers and duns, might resolve on becoming thirteen again, and a bird-nesting school-boy. Let no timid layman apprehend any overflow of priests from Mr. Taylor, or even of gods. Is not this commentary on the hitherto so inexplicable conversion of Friedrich Leopold Count Stolberg enough to quiet every alarmist?

'On the Continent of Europe, the gentleman, and Frederic Leopold was emphatically so, is seldom brought up with much solicitude for any positive doctrine: among the Catholics, the moralist insists on the duty of conforming to the religion of one's ancestors; among the Protestants,

on the duty of conforming to the religion of the magistrate: but Frederic Leopold seems to have invented a new point of honour, and a most rational one,—the duty of conforming to the religion of one's father-in-law.

'A young man is the happier, while single, for being unincumbered with any religious restraints; but when the time comes for submitting to matrimony, he will find the precedent of Frederic Leopold well entitled to consideration. A predisposition to conform to the religion of the father-in-law facilitates advantageous matrimonial connexions; it produces in a family the desirable harmony of religious profession; it secures the sincere education of the daughters in the faith of their mother; and it leaves the young men at liberty to apostatise in their turn, to exert their right of private judgment, and to choose a worship for themselves. Religion, if a blemish in the male, is surely a grace in the female sex: courage of mind may tend to acknowledge nothing above itself; but timidity is ever disposed to look upwards for protection, for consolation and for happiness.'

With regard to this latter point, whether Religion is 'a blemish in the male, and surely a grace in the female sex,' it is possible judgments may remain suspended: Courage of mind, indeed, will prompt the squirrel to set itself in posture against an armed horseman; yet whether for men and women, who seem to stand, not only under the Galaxy and Stellar system, and under Immensity and Eternity, but even under any bare bodkin or drop of prussic acid, 'such courage of mind as may tend to acknowledge nothing above itself,' were ornamental or the contrary; whether, lastly, Religion is grounded on Fear, or on something infinitely higher and inconsistent with Fear, —may be questions. But they are of a kind we are not at present called to meddle with.

Mr. Taylor promulgates many other strange articles of faith, for he is a positive man, and has a certain quiet wilfulness; these, however, cannot henceforth much surprise us. He still calls the Middle Ages, during which nearly all the inventions and social institutions, whereby we yet live as civilised men, were originated or perfected, 'a Millennium of Darkness'; on the faith chiefly of certain long-past Pedants, who reckoned everything barren, because Chrysoloras had not yet come, and

no Greek Roots grew there. Again, turning in the other direction, he criticises Luther's Reformation, and repeats that old and indeed quite foolish story of the Augustine Monk's having a merely commercial grudge against the Dominican; computes the quantity of blood shed for Protestantism; and, forgetting that men shed blood in all ages, for any cause and for no cause, for Sansculottism, for Bonapartism, thinks that, on the whole, the Reformation was an error and failure. Pity that Providence (as King Alphonso wished in the Astronomical case) had not created its man three centuries sooner, and taken a little counsel from him! On the other hand, 'Voltaire's Reformation' was successful; and here, for once, Providence was right. Will Mr. Taylor mention what it was that Voltaire *re-formed*? Many things he *de*-formed, deservedly and undeservedly; but the thing that he *formed* or *re*-formed is still unknown to the world.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that Mr. Taylor's whole Philosophy is sensual; that is, he recognises nothing that cannot be weighed, measured, and, with one or the other organ, eaten and digested. Logic is his only lamp of life; where this fails, the region of Creation terminates. For him there is no Invisible, Incomprehensible; whosoever, under any name, believes in an Invisible, he treats, with leniency and the loftiest tolerance, as a mystic and lunatic; and if the unhappy crack-brain has any handicraft, literary or other, allows him to go at large, and work at it. Withal he is a great-hearted, strong-minded, and, in many points, interesting man. There is a majestic composure in the attitude he has assumed; massive, immovable, uncomplaining, he sits in a world of Delirium; and for his Future looks with sure faith, —only in the direction of the Past. We take him to be a man of sociable turn, not without kindness; at all events of the most perfect courtesy. He despises the entire Universe, yet speaks respectfully of Translators from the German, and always says that they 'english beautifully.' A certain mild Dogmatism sits well on him; peaceable, incontrovertible,

uttering the palpably absurd as if it were a mere truism. On the other hand, there are touches of a grave, scientific obscenity, which are questionable. This word Obscenity we use with reference to our readers, and might also add Profanity, but not with reference to Mr. Taylor; he, as we said, is scientific merely; and where there is no *cœnum* and no *fanum*, there can be no obscenity and no profanity.

To a German we might have compressed all this long description into a single word: Mr. Taylor is simply what they call a *Philister*; every fibre of him is Philistine. With us such men usually take into Politics, and become Code-makers and Utilitarians: it was only in Germany that they ever meddled much with Literature; and there worthy Nicolai has long since terminated his Jesuit-hunt; no Adelung now writes books, *Ueber die Nützlichkeit der Empfindung* (On the Utility of Feeling). Singular enough, now, when that old species had been quite extinct for almost half a century in their own land, appears a natural-born English Philistine, made in all points as they were. With wondering welcome we hail the Strongboned; almost as we might a resuscitated Mammoth. Let no David choose smooth stones from the brook to sling at him: is he not our own Goliath, whose limbs were made in England, whose thews and sinews any soil might be proud of? Is he not, as we said, a man that can stand on his own legs without collapsing when left by himself? In these days, one of the greatest rarities, almost prodigies.

We cheerfully acquitted Mr. Taylor of Religion; but must expect less gratitude when we farther deny him any feeling for true Poetry, as indeed the feelings for Religion and for Poetry of this sort are one and the same. Of Poetry Mr. Taylor knows well what will make a grand, especially a large, *picture* in the imagination: he has even a creative gift of this kind himself, as his style will often testify; but much more he does not know. How indeed should he? Nicolai, too, 'judged of Poetry as he did of Brunswick Mum, simply by *tasting* it.' Mr. Taylor assumes, as a fact known to all think-

ing creatures, that Poetry is neither more nor less than 'a stimulant.' Perhaps above five hundred times in the *Historic Survey* we see this doctrine expressly acted on. Whether the piece to be judged of is a Poetical Whole, and has what the critics have named a genial life, and what that life is, he inquires not; but, at best, whether it is a Logical Whole, and for most part, simply, whether it is stimulant. The praise is, that it has fine situations, striking scenes, agonising scenes, harrows his feelings, and the like. Schiller's *Robbers* he finds to be stimulant; his *Maid of Orleans* is not stimulant, but 'among the weakest of his tragedies, and composed apparently in ill health.' The author of *Pizarro* is supremely stimulant; he of *Torquato Tasso* is 'too quotidian to be stimulant.' We had understood that alcohol was stimulant in all its shapes; opium also, tobacco, and indeed the whole class of narcotics; but heretofore found Poetry in none of the Pharmacopœias. Nevertheless, it is edifying to observe with what fearless consistency Mr. Taylor, who is no half-man, carries through this theory of stimulation. It lies privily in the heart of many a reader and reviewer; nay, Schiller, at one time, said that 'Molière's old woman seemed to have become sole Editress of all Reviews'; but seldom, in the history of Literature, has she had the honesty to unveil and ride triumphant, as in these Volumes. Mr. Taylor discovers that the only Poet to be classed with Homer is Tasso; that Shakspeare's Tragedies are cousins-german to those of Otway; that poor moaning, monotonous Macpherson is an epic poet. Lastly, he runs a laboured parallel between Schiller, Goethe and Kotzebue; one is more this, the other more that; one strives hither, the other thither, through the whole string of critical predicables; almost as if we should compare scientifically Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the *Prophecies of Isaiah* and Mat Lewis's *Tales of Terror*.

Such is Mr. Taylor; a strong-hearted oak, but in an unkindly soil, and beat upon from infancy by Trinitarian and Tory Southwesters: such is the result which native vigour, wind-storms and thirsty mould have made out among them;

grim boughs dishevelled in multangular complexity, and of the stiffness of brass; a tree crooked every way, unwedgeable and gnarled. What bandages or cordages of ours, or of man's, could straighten it, now that it has grown there for half a century? We simply point out that there is excellent tough *knee-timber* in it, and of straight timber little or none.

In fact, taking Mr. Taylor as he is and must be, and keeping a perpetual account and protest with him on these peculiarities of his, we find that on various parts of his subject he has profitable things to say. The Göttingen group of Poets, 'Bürger and his set,' such as they were, are pleasantly delineated. The like may be said of the somewhat earlier Swiss brotherhood, whereof Bodmer and Breitinger are the central figures; though worthy wonderful Lavater, the wandering Physiognomist and Evangelist, and Protestant Pope, should not have been first forgotten, and then crammed into an insignificant paragraph. Lessing, again, is but poorly managed; his main performance, as was natural, reckoned to be the writing of *Nathan the Wise*: we have no original portrait here, but a pantagraphical reduced copy of some foreign sketches or scratches; quite unworthy of such a man, in such a historical position, standing on the confines of Light and Darkness, like Day on the misty mountain tops. Of Herder also there is much omitted; the *Geschichte der Menschheit* scarcely alluded to; yet some features are given, accurately and even beautifully. A slow-rolling grandiloquence is in Mr. Taylor's best passages, of which this is one: if no poetic light, he has occasionally a glow of true rhetorical heat. Wieland is lovingly painted, yet on the whole faithfully, as he looked some fifty years ago, if not as he now looks; this is the longest article in the *Historic Survey*, and much too long; those Paganising *Dialogues* in particular had never much worth, and at present have scarcely any.

Perhaps the best of all these Essays is that on Klopstock. The sphere of Klopstock's genius does not transcend Mr. Taylor's scale of poetic altitudes; though it perhaps reaches

the highest grade there; the 'stimulant' theory recedes into the background; indeed there is a rhetorical amplitude and brilliancy in the *Messias*, which elicits in our critic an instinct truer than his philosophy is. He has honestly studied the *Messias*, and presents a clear outline of it; neither has the still purer spirit of Klopstock's *Odes* escaped him. We have English Biographies of Klopstock, and a miserable Version of his great Work; but perhaps there is no writing in our language that offers so correct an emblem of him as this analysis. Of the *Odes* we shall here present one, in Mr. Taylor's translation, which, though in prose, the reader will not fail to approve of. It is, perhaps, the finest passage in this whole *Historic Survey*.

'THE TWO MUSES

'I saw—tell me, was I beholding what now happens, or was I beholding futurity?—I saw with the Muse of Britain the Muse of Germany engaged in competitory race,—flying warm to the goal of coronation.

'Two goals, where the prospect terminates, bordered the career: Oaks of the forest shaded the one; near to the other waved Palms in the evening shadow.

'Accustomed to contest, stepped she from Albion proudly into the arena; as she stepped, when, with the Grecian Muse and with her from the Capitol, she entered the lists.

'She beheld the young trembling rival, who trembled yet with dignity; glowing roses worthy of victory streamed flaming over her cheek, and her golden hair flew abroad.

'Already she retained with pain in her tumultuous bosom the contracted breath; already she hung bending forward towards the goal; already the herald was lifting the trumpet, and her eyes swam with intoxicating joy.

'Proud of her courageous rival, prouder of herself, the lofty Britoness measured, but with noble glance, thee, Tuiskone: "Yes, by the bards, I grew up with thee in the grove of oaks:

'"But a tale had reached me that thou wast no more. Pardon, O Muse, if thou beest immortal, pardon that I but now learn it. Yonder at the goal alone will I learn it.

'"There it stands. But dost thou see the still farther one, and its crowns also? This represt courage, this proud silence, this look which sinks fiery upon the ground, I know:

'"Yet weigh once again, ere the herald sound a note dangerous to thee. Am I not she who have measured myself with her from Thermopylæ, and with the stately one of the Seven Hills?"

'She spake: the earnest decisive moment drew nearer with the herald. "I love thee," answered quick with looks of flame Teutona; "Britoness, I love thee to enthusiasm;

'"But not warmer than immortality and those Palms. Touch, if so wills thy genius, touch them before me; yet will I, when thou seizest it, seize also the crown.

'"And, O, how I tremble!—O ye Immortals, perhaps I may reach first the high goal: then, O, then, may thy breath attain my loose-streaming hair!"

'The herald shrilled. They flew with eagle-speed. The wide career smoked-up clouds of dust. I looked. Beyond the Oak billowed yet thicker the dust, and I lost them.'

'This beautiful allegory,' adds Mr. Taylor, 'requires no illustration; but it constitutes one of the reasons for suspecting that the younger may eventually be the victorious Muse.' We hope not; but that the generous race may yet last through long centuries. Tuiskone has shot through a mighty space, since this Poet saw her: what if she were now slackening her speed, and the Britoness quickening hers?

If the Essay on Klopstock is the best, that on Kotzebue is undoubtedly the worst, in this Book, or perhaps in any book written by a man of ability in our day. It is one of those acts which, in the spirit of philanthropy, we could wish Mr. Taylor to conceal in profoundest secrecy; were it not that hereby the 'stimulant' theory, a heresy which still lurks here and there even in our better criticism, is in some sort brought to a crisis, and may the sooner depart from this world, or at least from the high places of it, into others more suitable. Kotzebue, whom all nations and kindreds and tongues and peoples, his own people the foremost, after playing with him for some foolish hour, have swept out of doors as a lifeless bundle of dyed rags, is here scientifically examined, measured, pulse-felt, and pronounced to be living, and a divinity. He has such prolific 'invention'; abounds so in 'fine situations,' in passionate scenes; is so soul-harrowing, so stimulant. The

Engraved by [illegible]

Proceedings at Bow Street are stimulant enough; neither are prolific invention, interesting situations, or soul-harrowing passion wanting among the *authors* (true creators) who promulgate their *works* there; least of all, if we follow them to Newgate and the gallows: but when did the *Morning Herald* think of inserting its *Police Reports* among our Anthologies? Mr. Taylor is at the pains to analyse very many of Kotzebue's productions, and translates copiously from two or three: how the Siberian Governor took-on when his daughter was about to run away with one Benjowsky, who, however, was enabled to surrender his prize, there on the beach, with sails hoisted, by 'looking at his wife's picture'; how the people 'lift young Burgundy from the Tun,' not indeed to drink him, for he is not wine but a Duke: how a certain stout-hearted West Indian, that has made a fortune, proposes marriage to his two sisters; but finding the ladies reluctant, solicits their serving-woman, whose reputation is not only cracked, but visibly quite rent asunder; accepts her nevertheless, with her thriving cherub, and is the happiest of men;—with more of the like sort. On the strength of which we are assured that, 'according to my judgment, Kotzebue is the greatest dramatic genius that Europe has evolved since Shakspeare.' Such is the table which Mr. Taylor has spread for pilgrims in the Prose Wilderness of Life: thus does he sit like a kind host, ready to carve; and though the viands and beverage are but, as it were, stewed garlic, Yarmouth herrings, and *blue-ruin*, praises them as 'stimulant,' and courteously presses the universe to fall-to.

What a purveyor with this palate shall say to Nectar and Ambrosia, may be curious as a question in Natural History, but hardly otherwise. The most of what Mr. Taylor has written on Schiller, on Goethe, and the new Literature of Germany, a reader that loves him, as we honestly do, will consider as unwritten, or written in a state of somnambulism. He who has just quitted Kotzebue's Bear-garden and Fives-court, and pronounces it to be all stimulant and very good,

what is there for him to do in the Hall of the Gods? He looks transiently in; asks with mild authority, "Arian or Trinitarian? Quotidian or Stimulant?" and receiving no answer but a hollow echo, which almost sounds like laughter, passes on, muttering that they are dumb idols, or mere Nürnberg waxwork.

It remains to notice Mr. Taylor's Translations. Apart from the choice of subjects, which in probably more than half the cases is unhappy, there is much to be said in favour of these. Compared with the average of British Translations, they may be pronounced of almost ideal excellence; compared with the best Translations extant,—for example, the German *Shakspeare*, *Homer*, *Calderon*,—they may still be called better than indifferent. One great merit Mr. Taylor has: rigorous adherence to his original; he endeavours at least to copy with all possible fidelity the turn of phrase, the tone, the very metre, whatever stands written for him. With the German language he has now had a long familiarity, and, what is no less essential, and perhaps still rarer among our Translators, has a decided understanding of English. All this of Mr. Taylor's own Translations: in the borrowed pieces, whereof there are several, we seldom, except indeed in those by Shelley and Coleridge, find much worth; sometimes a distinct worthlessness. Mr. Taylor has made no conscience of clearing those unfortunate performances even from their gross blunders. Thus, in that 'excellent version by Miss Plumtre,' we find this statement: 'Professor Müller could not utter a period without introducing the words *with under*, whether they had business there or not'; which statement, were it only on the ground that Professor Müller was not sent to Bedlam, there to utter periods, we venture to deny. Doubtless his besetting sin was *mitunter*, which indeed means *at the same time*, or the like (etymologically, *with among*), but nowise *with under*. One other instance we shall give, from a much more important subject. Mr. Taylor admits that he does not make much of *Faust*: however, he inserts Shelley's version of the *Mayday*

Night; and another scene, evidently rendered by quite a different artist. In this latter, Margaret is in the Cathedral during High-Mass, but her whole thoughts are turned inwards on a secret shame and sorrow: an Evil Spirit is whispering in her ear; the Choir chant fragments of the *Dies iræ*; she is like to choke and sink. In the original, this passage is in verse; and, we presume, in the translation also,—founding on the capital letters. The concluding lines are these:

MARGARET

I feel imprison'd. The thick pillars gird me.
The vaults lour o'er me. Air, air! I faint!

EVIL SPIRIT

Where wilt thou lie concealed? for sin and shame
Remain not hidden—woe is coming *down*.

THE CHOIR

Quid sum miser tum dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus.

EVIL SPIRIT

From thee the glorified *avert their view*,
The pure *forbear* to offer thee a hand.

THE CHOIR

Quid sum miser tum dicturus?

MARGARET

Neighbour, your ————

—Your what?—Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—'*Your Drambottle.*' Will Mr. Taylor have us understand, then, that 'the noble German nation,' more especially the fairer half thereof (for the 'Neighbour' is *Nachbarin*, Neighbour*ess*), goes to church with a decanter of brandy in its pocket? Or would he not rather, even forcibly, interpret *Fläschchen* by *vinaigrette*, by *volatile-salts*?—The world has no notice that this passage is a borrowed one, but will,

notwithstanding, as the more charitable theory, hope and believe so.

We have now done with Mr. Taylor; and would fain, after all that has come and gone, part with him in good nature and good will. He has spoken freely; we have answered freely. Far as we differ from him in regard to German Literature, and to the much more important subjects here connected with it; deeply as we feel convinced that his convictions are wrong and dangerous, are but half true, and, if taken for the whole truth, wholly false and fatal, we have nowise blinded ourselves to his vigorous talent, to his varied learning, his sincerity, his manful independence and self-support. Neither is it for speaking out plainly that we blame him. A man's honest, earnest opinion is the most precious of all he possesses: let him communicate this, if he is to communicate anything. There is, doubtless, a time to speak, and a time to keep silence; yet Fontenelle's celebrated aphorism, *I might have my hand full of truth, and would open only my little finger*, may be practised also to excess, and the little finger itself kept closed. That reserve and knowing silence, long so universal among us, is less the fruit of active benevolence, of philosophic tolerance, than of indifference and weak conviction. Honest Scepticism, honest Atheism, is better than the withered lifeless Dilettantism and amateur Eclecticism, which merely toys with all opinions; or than that wicked Macchiavellism, which in thought denying everything, except that Power is Power, in words, for its own wise purposes, loudly believes everything: of both which miserable habitudes the day, even in England, is wellnigh over. That Mr. Taylor belongs not, and at no time belonged, to either of these classes, we account a true praise. Of his *Historic Survey* we have endeavoured to point out the faults and the merits: should he reach a second edition, which we hope, perhaps he may profit by some of our hints, and render the work less unworthy of himself and of his subject. In its present state and shape, this

English Temple of Fame can content no one. A huge, anomalous, heterogeneous mass, no section of it like another, oriel-window alternating with rabbit-hole, wrought capital on pillar of dried mud; heaped together out of marble, loose earth, rude boulder-stone; hastily roofed-in with shingles: such is the Temple of Fame; uninhabitable either for priest or statue, and which nothing but a continued suspension of the laws of gravity can keep from rushing ere long into a chaos of stone and dust. For the English worshipper, who in the mean while has no other temple, we search out the least dangerous apartments; for the future builder, the materials that will be valuable.

And now, in washing our hands of this all-too sordid but not unnecessary task, one word on a more momentous object. Does not the existence of such a Book, do not many other indications, traceable in France, in Germany, as well as here, betoken that a new era in the spiritual intercourse of Europe is approaching; that instead of isolated, mutually repulsive National Literatures, a World Literature may one day be looked for? The better minds of all countries begin to understand each other; and, which follows naturally, to love each other, and help each other; by whom ultimately all countries in all their proceedings are governed.

Late in man's history, yet clearly at length, it becomes manifest to the dullest, that mind is stronger than matter, that mind is the creator and shaper of matter; that not brute Force, but only Persuasion and Faith is the king of this world. The true Poet, who is but the inspired Thinker, is still an Orpheus whose Lyre tames the savage beasts, and evokes the dead rocks to fashion themselves into palaces and stately inhabited cities. It has been said, and may be repeated, that Literature is fast becoming all in all to us; our Church, our Senate, our whole Social Constitution. The true Pope of Christendom is not that feeble old man in Rome; nor is its Autocrat the Napoleon, the Nicholas, with his half-

million even of obedient bayonets: such Autocrat is himself but a more cunningly-devised bayonet and military engine in the hands of a mightier than he. The true Autocrat and Pope is that man, the real or seeming Wisest of the past age; crowned after death; who finds his Hierarchy of gifted Authors, his Clergy of assiduous Journalists; whose Decretals, written not on parchment, but on the living souls of men, it were an inversion of the laws of Nature to *dis*obey. In these times of ours, all Intellect has fused itself into Literature: Literature, Printed Thought, is the molten sea and wonder-bearing chaos, into which mind after mind casts forth its opinion, its feeling, to be molten into the general mass, and to work there; Interest after Interest is engulfed in it, or embarked on it: higher, higher it rises round all the Edifices of Existence; they must all be molten into it, and anew bodied forth from it, or stand unconsumed among its fiery surges. Woe to him whose Edifice is not built of true Asbest, and on the everlasting Rock; but on the false sand, and of the drift-wood of Accident, and the paper and parchment of antiquated Habit! For the power or powers, exist not on our Earth, that can say to that sea, Roll back, or bid its proud waves be still.

What form so omnipotent an element will assume; how long it will welter to and fro as a wild Democracy, a wild Anarchy; what Constitution and Organisation it will fashion for itself, and for what depends on it, in the depths of Time, is a subject for prophetic conjecture, wherein brightest hope is not unmingled with fearful apprehension and awe at the boundless unknown. The more cheering is this one thing which we do see and know: That its tendency is to a universal European Commonweal; that the wisest in all nations will communicate and coöperate; whereby Europe will again have its true Sacred College, and Council of Amphictyons; wars will become rarer, less inhuman, and in the course of centuries such delirious ferocity in nations, as in individuals it already is, may be proscribed, and become obsolete for ever.

GOETHE'S PORTRAIT[1]

[1832]

READER! thou here beholdest the Eidolon of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. So looks and lives, now in his eighty-third year, afar in the bright little friendly circle of Weimar, 'the clearest, most universal man of his time.' Strange enough is the cunning that resides in the ten fingers, especially what they bring to pass by pencil and pen! Him who never saw England, England now sees: from Fraser's 'Gallery' he looks forth here, wondering, doubtless, how *he* came into such a '*Lichtstrasse*, lightstreet,' or galaxy; yet with kind recognition of all neighbours, even as the moon looks kindly on lesser lights, and, were they but fish-oil cressets, or terrestrial Vauxhall stars (of clipped tin), forbids not their shining.—Nay, the very soul of the man thou canst likewise behold. Do but look well in those forty volumes of 'musical wisdom,' which, under the title of *Goethes Werke*, Cotta of Tübingen, or Black and Young of Covent Garden,—once offer them a trifle of drink-money,—will cheerfully hand thee: greater sight, or more profitable, thou wilt not meet with in this generation. The German language, it is presumable, thou knowest; if not, shouldst thou undertake the study thereof for that sole end, it were well worth thy while.

Croquis, a man otherwise of rather satirical turn, surprises us, on this occasion, with a fit of enthusiasm. He declares often, that here is the finest of all living heads; speaks much

[1] FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 26.—By Stieler of Munich: the copy in *Fraser's Magazine* proved a total failure and involuntary caricature,—resembling, as was said at the time, a wretched old clothesman carrying behind his back a hat which he seemed to have stolen.

of blended passion and repose; serene depths of eyes; the brow, the temples, royally arched, a very palace of thought; —and so forth.

The Writer of these Notices is not without decision of character, and can believe what he knows. He answers Brother Croquis, that it is no wonder the head should be royal and a palace; for a most royal work was appointed to be done therein. Reader! within that head the whole world lies mirrored, in such clear ethereal harmony as it has done in none since Shakspeare left us: even *this* rag-fair of a world, wherein thou painfully strugglest, and (as is like) stumblest,—all lies transfigured here, and revealed authentically to be still holy, still divine. What alchemy was that: to find a mad universe full of scepticism, discord, desperation; and *transmute* it into a wise universe of belief, and melody, and reverence! Was not *there* an *opus magnum*, if one ever was? This, then, is he who, heroically doing and enduring, has accomplished it.

In this distracted Time of ours, wherein men have lost their old loadstars, and wandered after night-fires and foolish will-o'-wisps; and all things, in that 'shaking of the nations,' have been tumbled into chaos, the high made low, and the low high; and ever and anon some duke of this, and king of that, is gurgled aloft, to float there for moments; and fancies himself the governor and head-director of it all, and *is* but the topmost froth-bell, to burst again and mingle with the wild fermenting mass: in this so despicable Time, we say, there were nevertheless (be the bounteous Heavens ever thanked for it!) *two great men* sent among us. The one, in the island of St. Helena now sleeps 'dark and lone, amid the Ocean's everlasting lullaby'; the other still rejoices in the blessed sunlight, on the banks of the Ilme.

Great was the part allotted each, great the talent given him for the same; yet, mark the contrast! Bonaparte walked through the war-convulsed world like an all-devouring earthquake, heaving, thundering, hurling kingdom over kingdom;

Goethe was as the mild-shining, inaudible Light, which, notwithstanding, can again make that Chaos into a Creation. Thus too, we see Napoleon, with his Austerlitzes, Waterloos and Borodinos, is quite gone; all departed, sunk to silence like a tavern-brawl. While this other!—*he* still shines with his direct radiance; his inspired words are to abide in living hearts, as the life and inspiration of thinkers, born and still unborn. Some fifty years hence, his thinking will be found translated, and ground down, even to the capacity of the diurnal press; acts of parliament will be passed in virtue of him:—this man, if we will consider of it, is appointed to be ruler of the world.

Reader! to thee thyself, even now, he has one counsel to give, the secret of his whole poetic alchemy: GEDENKE ZU LEBEN. Yes, 'think of living'! Thy life, wert thou the 'pitifulest of all the sons of earth,' is no idle dream, but a solemn reality. It is thy own; it is all thou hast to front eternity with. Work, then, even as he has done, and does, —LIKE A STAR, UNHASTING, YET UNRESTING.'—*Sic valeas.*

DEATH OF GOETHE[1]

[1832]

In the Obituary of these days stands one article of quite peculiar import; the time, the place and particulars of which will have to be often repeated and re-written, and continue in remembrance many centuries: this namely, that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe died at Weimar, on the 22d March 1832. It was about eleven in the morning; 'he expired,' says the record, 'without any apparent suffering, having, a few minutes previously, called for paper for the purpose of writing, and expressed his delight at the arrival of spring.' A beautiful death; like that of a soldier found faithful at his post, and in the cold hand his arms still grasped! The Poet's last words are a greeting of the new-awakened Earth; his last movement is to work at his appointed task. Beautiful; what we might call a Classic sacred-death; if it were not rather an Elijah-translation,—in a chariot, not of fire and terror, but of hope and soft vernal sunbeams! It was at Frankfort-on-Mayn, on the 28th of August 1749, that this man entered the world: and now, gently welcoming the birthday of his eighty-second spring, he closes his eyes, and takes farewell.

So, then, our Greatest has departed. That melody of life, with its cunning tones, which took captive ear and heart, has gone silent; the heavenly force that dwelt here victorious over so much, is here no longer; thus far, not farther, by speech and by act, shall the wise man utter himself forth. The End! What solemn meaning lies in that sound, as it peals mournfully through the soul, when a living friend has

[1] New Monthly Magazine, No. 138.

passed away! All now is closed, irrevocable; the changeful life-picture, growing daily into new coherence, under new touches and hues, has suddenly become completed and unchangeable; there as it lay, it is dipped, from this moment, in the æther of the heavens, and shines transfigured, to endure even so—forever. Time and Time's Empire; stern, wide-devouring, yet not without their grandeur! The week-day man, who was one of us, has put on the garment of Eternity, and become radiant and triumphant; the Present is all at once the Past; Hope is suddenly cut away, and only the backward vistas of Memory remain, shone on by a light that proceeds not from this earthly sun.

The death of Goethe, even for the many hearts that personally loved him, is not a thing to be lamented over; is to be viewed, in his own spirit, as a thing full of greatness and sacredness. For all men it is appointed once to die. To this man the full measure of a man's life had been granted, and a course and task such as to only a few in the whole generations of the world: what else could we hope or require but that now he should be called hence, and have leave to depart, having finished the work that was given him to do? If his course, as we may say of him more justly than of any other, was like the Sun's, so also was his going down. For indeed, as the material Sun is the eye and revealer of all things, so is Poetry, so is the World-Poet in a spiritual sense. Goethe's life too, if we examine it, is well represented in that emblem of a solar Day. Beautifully rose our summer sun, gorgeous in the red fervid east, scattering the spectres and sickly damps (of both of which there were enough to scatter); strong, benignant in his noonday clearness, walking triumphant through the upper realms; and now, mark also how he sets! '*So stirbt ein Held; anbetungsvoll*, So dies a hero; sight to be worshipped!'

And yet, when the inanimate material sun has sunk and disappeared, it will happen that we stand to gaze into the still-glowing west; and there rise great pale motionless clouds,

like coulisses or curtains, to close the flame-theatre within; and then, in that death-pause of the Day, an unspeakable feeling will come over us: it is as if the poor sounds of Time, those hammerings of tired Labour on his anvils, those voices of simple men, had become awful and supernatural; as if in listening, we could hear them 'mingle with the everpealing tone of old Eternity.' In such moments the secrets of Life lie opener to us; mysterious things flit over the soul; Life itself seems holier, wonderful and fearful. How much more when our sunset was of a living sun; and *its* bright countenance and shining return to us, not on the morrow, but 'no more again, at all, forever'! In such a scene, silence, as over the mysterious great, is for him that has some feeling thereof the fittest mood. Nevertheless by silence the distant is not brought into communion; the feeling of each is without response from the bosom of his brother. There are now, what some years ago there were not, English hearts that know something of what those three words, 'Death of Goethe,' mean; to such men, among their many thoughts on the event, which are not to be translated into speech, may these few, through that imperfect medium, prove acceptable.

'Death,' says the Philosopher, 'is a commingling of Eternity with Time; in the death of a good man, Eternity is seen looking through Time.' With such a sublimity here offered to eye and heart, it is not unnatural to look with new earnestness before and behind, and ask, What space in those years and æons of computed Time, this man with his activity may influence; what relation to the world of change and mortality, which the earthly name Life, he who is even now called to the Immortals has borne and may bear.

Goethe, it is commonly said, made a New Era in Literature; a Poetic Era began with him, the end or ulterior tendencies of which are yet nowise generally visible. This common saying is a true one; and true with a far deeper meaning than, to the most, it conveys. Were the Poet but a sweet sound and singer, solacing the ear of the idle with

pleasant songs; and the new Poet one who could sing his idle pleasant song to a new air,—we should account him a small matter, and his performance small. But this man, it is not unknown to many, was a Poet in such a sense as the late generations have witnessed no other; as it is, in this generation, a kind of distinction to believe in the existence of, in the possibility of. The true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer; whose eye has been gifted to discern the godlike Mystery of God's Universe, and decipher some new lines of its celestial writing; we can still call him a *Vates* and Seer; for he *sees* into this greatest of secrets, 'the open secret'; hidden things become clear; how the Future (both resting on Eternity) is but another phasis of the Present: thereby are his words in very truth prophetic; what he has spoken shall be done.

It begins now to be everywhere surmised that the real Force, which in this world all things must obey, is Insight, Spiritual Vision and Determination. The Thought is parent of the Deed, nay, is living soul of it, and last and continual, as well as first mover of it; is the foundation and beginning and essence, therefore, of man's whole existence here below. In this sense, it has been said, the Word of man (the uttered Thought of man) is still a magic formula, whereby he rules the world. Do not the winds and waters, and all tumultuous powers, inanimate and animate, obey him? A poor, quite mechanical Magician speaks; and fire-winged ships cross the Ocean at his bidding. Or mark, above all, that 'raging of the nations,' wholly in contention, desperation and dark chaotic fury; how the meek voice of a Hebrew Martyr and Redeemer stills it into order, and a savage Earth becomes kind and beautiful, and the habitation of horrid cruelty a temple of peace. The true Sovereign of the world, who moulds the world like soft wax, according to his pleasure, is he who lovingly *sees* into the world; the 'inspired Thinker,' whom in these days we name Poet. The true Sovereign is the Wise Man.

However, as the Moon, which can heave-up the Atlantic, sends not in her obedient billows at once, but gradually; and the Tide, which swells today on our shores, and washes every creek, rose in the bosom of the great Ocean (astronomers assure us) eight-and-forty hours ago; and indeed, all world-movements, by nature deep, are by nature calm, and flow and swell onwards with a certain majestic slowness: so too with the Impulse of a Great Man, and the effect he has to manifest on other men. To such a one we may grant some generation or two, before the celestial Impulse he impressed on the world will universally proclaim itself, and become (like the working of the Moon) if still not intelligible, yet palpable, to all men; some generation or two more, wherein it has to grow, and expand, and envelop all things, before it can reach its acme; and thereafter mingling with other movements and new impulses, at length cease to require a specific observation or designation. Longer or shorter such period may be, according to the nature of the Impulse itself, and of the elements it works in; according, above all, as the Impulse was intrinsically great and deep-reaching, or only wide-spread, superficial and transient. Thus, if David Hume is at this hour pontiff of the world, and rules most hearts, and guides most tongues (the hearts and tongues even of those that in vain rebel against him), there are nevertheless symptoms that his task draws towards completion; and now in the distance his successor becomes visible. On the other hand, we have seen a Napoleon, like some gunpowder force (with which sort, indeed, he chiefly worked), explode his whole virtue suddenly, and thunder himself out and silent, in a space of five-and-twenty years. While again, for a man of true greatness, working with spiritual implements, two centuries is no uncommon period; nay, on this Earth of ours, there have been men whose Impulse had not completed its development till after fifteen hundred years, and might perhaps be seen still individually subsistent after two thousand.

But, as was once written, ‘ though our clock strikes when

there is a change from hour to hour, no hammer in the Horologe of Time peals through the Universe to proclaim that there is a change from era to era.' The true Beginning is oftenest unnoticed and unnoticeable. Thus do men go wrong in their reckoning; and grope hither and thither, not knowing where they are, in what course their history runs. Within this last century, for instance, with its wild doings and destroyings, what hope, grounded on miscalculation, ending in disappointment! How many world-famous victories were gained and lost, dynasties founded and subverted, revolutions accomplished, constitutions sworn to; and ever the 'new era' was come, was coming, yet still it came not, but the time continued sick! Alas, all these were but spasmodic convulsions of the death-sick time: the crisis of cure and regeneration to the time was not there indicated. The real new era was when a Wise Man came into the world, with clearness of vision and greatness of soul to accomplish this old high enterprise, amid these new difficulties, yet again: A Life of Wisdom. Such a man became, by Heaven's preappointment, in very deed the Redeemer of the time. Did he not bear the curse of the time? He was filled full with its scepticism, bitterness, hollowness and thousandfold contradictions, till his heart was like to break; but he subdued all this, rose victorious over this, and manifoldly by word and act showed others that come after, how to do the like. Honour to him who first 'through the impassable paves a road'! Such, indeed, is the task of every great man; nay, of every good man in one or the other sphere, since goodness is greatness, and the good man, high or humble, is ever a martyr and 'spiritual hero that ventures forward into the gulf for our deliverance.' The gulf into which this man ventured, which he tamed and rendered habitable, was the greatest and most perilous of all, wherein truly all others lie included: *The whole distracted Existence of man is an age of Unbelief.* Whoso lives, whoso with earnest mind studies to live wisely in that mad element, may yet know, perhaps too

well, what an enterprise was here; and for the Chosen Man of our time who could prevail in it, have the higher reverence, and a gratitude such as belongs to no other.

How far he prevailed in it, and by what means, with what endurances and achievements, will in due season be estimated. Those volumes called *Goethe's Works* will now receive no farther addition or alteration; and the record of his whole spiritual Endeavour lies written there,—were the man or men but ready that could read it rightly! A glorious record; wherein he who would understand himself and his environment, who struggles for escape out of darkness into light as for the one thing needful, will long thankfully study. For the whole chaotic Time, what it has suffered, attained and striven after, stands imaged there; interpreted, ennobled into poetic clearness. From the passionate longings and wailings of *Werter*, spoken as from the heart of all Europe; onwards through the wild unearthly melody of *Faust*, like the spirit-song of falling worlds; to that serenely smiling wisdom of *Meisters Lehrjahre*, and the *German Hafiz*,—what an interval; and all enfolded in an ethereal music, as from unknown spheres, harmoniously uniting all! A long interval; and wide as well as long; for this was a universal man. History, Science, Art, human Activity under every aspect; the laws of Light in his *Farbenlehre*; the laws of wild Italian Life in his *Benvenuto Cellini*;—nothing escaped him; nothing that he did not look into, that he did not see into. Consider, too, the genuineness of whatsoever he did; his hearty, idiomatic way; simplicity with loftiness, and nobleness, and aerial grace! Pure works of Art, completed with an antique Grecian polish, as *Torquato Tasso*, as *Iphigenie*; Proverbs; *Xenien*; Patriarchal Sayings, which, since the Hebrew Scriptures were closed, we know not where to match; in whose homely depths lie often the materials for volumes.

To measure and estimate all this, as we said, the time is not come; a century hence will be the fitter time. He who investigates it best will find its meaning greatest, and be the

readiest to acknowledge that it transcends him. Let the reader have *seen*, before he attempts to *oversee*. A poor reader, in the mean while, were he who discerned not here the authentic rudiments of that same New Era, whereof we have so often had false warning. Wondrously, the wrecks and pulverised rubbish of ancient things, institutions, religions, forgotten noblenesses, made alive again by the breath of Genius, lie here in new coherence and incipient union, the spirit of Art working creative through the mass; that *chaos*, into which the eighteenth century with its wild war of hypocrites and sceptics had reduced the Past, begins here to be once more a *world*.—This, the highest that can be said of written Books, is to be said of these: there is in them a New Time, the prophecy and beginning of a New Time. The corner-stone of a new social edifice for mankind is laid there; firmly, as before, on the natural rock: far-extending traces of a ground-plan we can also see; which future centuries may go on to enlarge, to amend and work into reality. These sayings seem strange to some; nevertheless they are not empty exaggerations, but expressions, in their way, of a belief, which is not now of yesterday; perhaps when Goethe has been read and meditated for another generation, they will not seem so strange.

Precious is the new light of Knowledge which our Teacher conquers for us; yet small to the new light of Love which also we derive from him: the most important element of any man's performance is the Life he has accomplished. Under the intellectual union of man and man, which works by precept, lies a holier union of affection, working by example; the influences of which latter, mystic, deep-reaching, all-embracing, can still less be computed. For Love is ever the beginning of Knowledge, as fire is of light; and works also more in the manner of *fire*. That Goethe was a great Teacher of men means already that he was a good man; that he had himself learned; in the school of experience had striven and proved victorious. To how many hearers, languishing, nigh dead, in

the airless dungeon of Unbelief (a true vacuum and nonentity), has the assurance that there was such a man, that such a man was still possible, come like tidings of great joy! He who would learn to reconcile reverence with clearness; to deny and defy what is False, yet believe and worship what is True; amid raging factions, bent on what is either altogether empty or has substance in it only for a day, which stormfully convulse and tear hither and thither a distracted expiring system of society, to adjust himself aright; and, working for the world and in the world, keep himself unspotted from the world,—let him look here. This man, we may say, became morally great, by being in his own age, what in some other ages many might have been, a genuine man. His grand excellency was this, that he was genuine. As his primary faculty, the foundation of all others, was Intellect, depth and force of Vision; so his primary virtue was Justice, was the courage to be just. A giant's strength we admired in him; yet, strength ennobled into softest mildness; even like that 'silent rock-bound strength of a world,' on whose bosom, which rests on the adamant, grow flowers. The greatest of hearts was also the bravest; fearless, unwearied, peacefully invincible. A completed man: the trembling sensibility, the wild enthusiasm of a Mignon can assort with the scornful world-mockery of a Mephistopheles; and each side of many-sided life receives its due from him.

Goethe reckoned Schiller happy that he died young, in the full vigour of his days; that we could 'figure him as a youth forever.' To himself a different, higher destiny was appointed. Through all the changes of man's life, onwards to its extreme verge he was to go; and through them all nobly. In youth, flatterings of fortune, uninterrupted outward prosperity cannot corrupt him; a wise observer has to remark: 'None but a Goethe, at the Sun of earthly happiness, can keep his phœnix-wings unsinged.'—Through manhood, in the most complex relation, as poet, courtier, politician, man of business, man of speculation; in the

middle of revolutions and counter-revolutions, outward and spiritual; with the world loudly for him, with the world loudly or silently against him; in all seasons and situations, he holds equally on his way. Old age itself, which is called dark and feeble, he was to render lovely: who that looked upon him there, venerable in himself, and in the world's reverence ever the clearer, the purer, but could have prayed that he too were such an old man? And did not the kind Heavens continue kind, and grant to a career so glorious the worthiest end?

Such was Goethe's Life; such has his departure been. He sleeps now beside his Schiller and his Carl August of Weimar: so had the Prince willed it, that between these two should be his own final rest. In life they were united, in death they are not divided. The unwearied Workman now rests from his labours; the fruit of these is left growing, and to grow. His earthly years have been numbered and ended: but of his Activity, for it stood rooted in the Eternal, there is no end. All that we mean by the higher Literature of Germany, which is the higher Literature of Europe, already gathers round this man, as its creator; of which grand object, dawning mysterious on a world that hoped not for it, who is there that can measure the significance and far-reaching influences? The Literature of Europe will pass away; Europe itself, the Earth itself will pass away: this little life-boat of an Earth, with its noisy crew of a Mankind, and all their troubled History, will one day have vanished; faded like a cloud-speck from the azure of the All! What, then, is man! What, then, is man! He endures but for an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man is there already (as all faith, from the beginning, gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of Time; that triumphs over Time, and *is*, and will be, when Time shall be no more.

And now we turn back into the world, withdrawing from this new-made grave. The man whom we love lies there:

but glorious, worthy; and his spirit yet lives in us with an authentic life. Could each here vow to do his little task, even as the Departed did his great one; in the manner of a true man, not for a Day, but for Eternity! To live, as he counselled and commanded, not commodiously in the Reputable, the Plausible, the Half, but resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True:

'Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben!'

GOETHE'S WORKS[1]

[1832]

It is now four years since we specially invited attention to this Book; first in an essay on the graceful little fantasy-piece of *Helena*, then in a more general one on the merits and workings of Goethe himself: since which time two important things have happened in reference to it; for the publication, advancing with successful regularity, reached its fortieth and last volume in 1830; and now, still more emphatically to conclude both this 'completed, final edition,' and all other editions, endeavours and attainments of one in whose hands lay so much, come tidings that the venerable man has been recalled from our earth, and of his long labours and high faithful stewardship we have had what was appointed us.

The greatest epoch in a man's life is not always his death; yet for bystanders, such as contemporaries, it is always the most noticeable. All other epochs are transition-points from one visible condition to another visible; the days of their occurrence are like any other days, from which only the clearer-sighted will distinguish them; bridges they are, over which the smooth highway runs continuous, as if no Rubicon were there. But the day in a mortal's destinies which is like no other is his death-day: here, too, is a transition, what we may call a bridge, as at other epochs; but now from the keystone onwards half the arch rests on invisibility; this is a transition out of visible Time into invisible Eternity.

[1] Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 19.—*Goethes Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand* (Goethe's Works. Completed, final Edition), 40 voll. Stuttgard and Tübingen, 1827-30.

Since Death, as the palpable revelation (not to be overlooked by the dullest) of the mystery of wonder and depth and fear, which everywhere from beginning to ending through its whole course and movement lies under Life, is in any case so great,—we find it not unnatural that hereby a new look of greatness, a new interest should be impressed on whatsoever has preceded it and led to it; that even towards some man, whose history did not then first become significant, the world should turn, at his departure, with a quite peculiar earnestness, and now seriously ask itself a question, perhaps never seriously asked before, What the purport and character of his presence here was; now when he has gone hence, and is not present here, and will remain absent forevermore. It is the conclusion that crowns the work; much more the irreversible conclusion wherein all is concluded: thus is there no life so mean but a death will make it memorable.

At all lykewakes, accordingly, the doings and endurances of the Departed are the theme: rude souls, rude tongues grow eloquently busy with him; a whole septuagint of beldames are striving to render, in such dialect as they have, the small bible, or apocrypha, of his existence, for the general perusal. The least famous of mankind will for once become public, and have his name printed, and read not without interest: in the Newspaper Obituaries; on some frail memorial, under which he has crept to sleep. Foolish love-sick girls know that there is one method to impress the obdurate false Lovelace, and wring his bosom; the method of drowning: foolish ruined dandies, whom the tailor will no longer trust, and the world turning on its heel is about forgetting, can recall it to attention by report of pistol; and so, in a worthless death, if in a worthless life no more, reattain the topgallant of renown,—for one day. Death is ever a sublimity and supernatural wonder, were there no other left: the last act of a most strange drama, which is not dramatic, but has now become real; wherein, miraculously, Furies, god-missioned, have in actual person risen from the abyss, and do verily dance there in that terror of all terrors,

and wave their dusky-glaring torches, and shake their serpent-hair! Out of which heart-thrilling, so authentically tragic fifth-act there goes, as we said, a new meaning over all the other four; making them likewise tragic and authentic, and memorable in some measure, were they formerly the sorriest pickle-herring farce.

But above all, when a Great Man dies, then has the time come for putting us in mind that he was alive; biographies and biographic sketches, criticisms, characters, anecdotes, reminiscences, issue forth as from opened springing fountains; the world, with a passion whetted by impossibility, will yet a while retain, yet a while speak with, though only to the unanswering echoes, what it has lost without remedy: thus is the last event of life often the loudest; and real spiritual *Apparitions* (who have been named Men), as false imaginary ones are fabled to do, vanish in thunder.

For ourselves, as regards the great Goethe, if not seeking to be foremost in this natural movement, neither do we shun to mingle in it. The life and ways of such men as he, are, in all seasons, a matter profitable to contemplate, to speak of: if in this death-season, long with a sad reverence looked forward to, there has little increase of light, little change of feeling arisen for the writer, a readier attention, nay, a certain expectancy, from some readers is call sufficient. Innumerable meditations and disquisitions on this subject must yet pass through the minds of men; on all sides must it be taken up, by various observers, by successive generations, and ever a new light may evolve itself: why should not this observer, on this side, set down what he partially has seen into; and the necessary process thereby be forwarded, at any rate continued?

A continental Humorist, of deep-piercing, resolute though strangely perverse faculty, whose works are as yet but sparingly if at all cited in English literature, has written a chapter, somewhat in the nondescript manner of metaphysico-rhetorical, homiletic-exegetic rhapsody, on the *Greatness of Great Men*; which topic we agree with him in reckoning one of the most

pregnant. The time, indeed, is come when much that was once found visibly subsistent Without must anew be sought for Within; many a human feeling, indestructible and to man's well-being indispensable, which once manifested itself in expressive forms to the Sense, now lies hidden in the *formless* depths of the Spirit, or at best struggles out obscurely in forms become superannuated, altogether inexpressive and unrecognisable; from which paralysed imprisoned state, often the best effort of the thinker is required, and moreover were well applied, to deliver it. For if the Present is to be the 'living sum-total of the whole Past,' nothing that ever lived in the Past must be let wholly die; whatsoever was done, whatsoever was said or written aforetime was done and written for our edification. In such state of imprisonment, paralysis and unrecognisable defacement, as compared with its condition in the old ages, lies this our feeling towards great men; wherein, and in the much else that belongs to it, some of the deepest human interests will be found involved. A few words from Herr Professor Teufelsdröckh, if they help to set this preliminary matter in a clearer light, may be worth translating here. Let us first remark with him, however, 'how wonderful in all cases, great or little, is the importance of man to man:'

'Deny it as he will,' says Teufelsdröckh, 'man reverently loves man, and daily by action evidences his belief in the divineness of man. What a more than regal mystery encircles the poorest of living souls for us! The highest is not independent of him; his suffrage has value: could the highest monarch convince himself that the humblest beggar with sincere mind despised him, no serried ranks of halberdiers and bodyguards could shut out some little twinge of pain; some emanation from the low had pierced into the bosom of the high. Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.

'Thus too has that fierce false hunting after Popularity, which you often wonder at, and laugh at, a basis on some-

thing true: nay, under the other aspect, what is that wonderful spirit of Interference, were it but manifested as the paltriest scandal and tea-table backbiting, other than inversely or directly, a heartfelt indestructible sympathy of man with man? Hatred itself is but an inverse love. The philosopher's wife complained to the philosopher that certain two-legged animals without feathers spake evil of him, spitefully criticised his goings out and comings in; wherein she too failed not of her share: "Light of my life," answered the philosopher, "it is their love of us, unknown to themselves, and taking a foolish shape; thank them for it, and do thou love them more wisely. Were we mere steam-engines working here under this rooftree, they would scorn to speak of us once in a twelvemonth." The last stage of human perversion, it has been said, is when sympathy corrupts itself into envy; and the indestructible interest we take in men's doings has become a joy over their faults and misfortunes: this is the last and lowest stage; lower than this we cannot go: the absolute petrifaction of indifference is not attainable on this side total death.

'And now,' continues the Professor, 'rising from these lowest tea-table regions of human communion into the higher and highest, is there not still in the world's demeanour towards Great Men, enough to make the old practice of *Hero-worship* intelligible, nay, significant? Simpleton! I tell thee Hero-worship still continues; it is the only creed which never and nowhere grows or can grow obsolete. For always and everywhere this remains a true saying: *Il y a dans le cœur humain un fibre religieux.* Man always *worships* something; always he sees the Infinite shadowed forth in something finite; and indeed can and must so see it in *any* finite thing, once tempt him well to *fix* his eyes thereon. Yes, in practice, be it in theory or not, we are all Supernaturalists; and have an infinite happiness or an infinite woe not only waiting us hereafter, but looking out on us through any pitifulest present good or evil;—as, for example, on a high poetic Byron through his

lameness; as on all young souls through their first lovesuit; as on older souls, still more foolishly, through many a lawsuit, paper-battle, political horse-race or ass-race. Atheism, it has been said, is impossible; and truly, if we will consider it, no Atheist denies a Divinity, but only some NAME (*Nomen*, *Numen*) of a Divinity: the God is still present there, working in that benighted heart, were it only as a god of darkness. Thousands of stern Sansculottes, to seek no other instance, go chanting martyr-hymns to their guillotine: these spurn at the name of a God; yet worship one (as hapless "Proselytes without the Gate") under the new pseudonym of Freedom. What indeed is all this that is called political fanaticism, revolutionary madness, force of hatred, force of love and so forth, but merely, under new designations, that same wondrous, wonder-working reflex from the Infinite, which in all times has given the Finite its empyrean or tartarean hue, thereby its blessedness or cursedness, its marketable worth or unworth?

'Remark, however, as illustrative of several things, and more to the purpose here, that man does in strict speech always remain the clearest symbol of the Divinity to man. Friend Novalis, the devoutest heart I knew, and of purest depth, has not scrupled to call man, what the Divine Man is called in Scripture, a "Revelation in the Flesh." "There is but one temple in the world," says he, "and that is the body of man. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body." In which notable words a reader that meditates them may find such meaning and scientific accuracy as will surprise him.

'The ages of superstition, it appears to be sufficiently known, are behind us. To no man, were he never so heroic, are shrines any more built, and vows offered as to one having supernatural power. The sphere of the TRANSCENDENTAL cannot now, by that avenue of heroic worth, of eloquent wisdom, or by any other avenue, be so easily reached. The worth that in these days could *transcend* all estimate or survey, and lead

men willingly captive into *infinite* admiration, into worship, is still waited for (with little hope) from the unseen Time. All that can be said to offer itself in that kind, at present, is some slight household devotion (*Haus-Andacht*), whereby this or the other enthusiast, privately in all quietness, can love his hero or sage without measure, and idealise, and so, in a sense, idolise him;—which practice, as man is by necessity an idol-worshipper (no offence in him *so* long as *idol* means accurately *vision*, clear *symbol*), and all wicked idolatry is but a *more* idolatrous worship, may be excusable, in certain cases praiseworthy. Be this as it will, let the curious eye gratify itself in observing how the old antediluvian feeling still, though now struggling out so imperfectly, and forced into unexpected shapes, asserts its existence in the newest man: and the Chaldeans or old Persians, with their Zerdusht, differ only in vesture and dialect from the French, with their Voltaire *étouffé sous des roses.*'[1]

This, doubtless, is a wonderful phraseology, but referable, as the Professor urges, to that capacious reservoir and convenience, 'the nature of the time': 'A time,' says he, 'when, as in some Destruction of a Roman Empire, wrecks of old things are everywhere confusedly jumbled with rudiments of new; so that, till once the mixture and amalgamation be complete, and even have long continued complete and universally apparent, no grammatical *langue d'oc* or *langue d'oui* can establish itself, but only some barbarous mixed *lingua rustica*, more like a jargon than a language, must prevail; and thus the deepest matters be either barbarously spoken of, or wholly omitted and lost sight of, which were still worse.' But to let the Homily proceed:

'Consider, at any rate,' continues he elsewhere, 'under how many categories, down to the most impertinent, the world inquires concerning Great Men, and never wearies striving to represent to itself their whole structure, aspect,

[1] *Die Kleider: ihr Werden und Wirken.* Von D. TEUFELSDRÖCKH. Weiss nichtwo Stillschweign'sche Buchhandlung, 1830.

procedure, outward and inward! Blame not the world for such minutest curiosity about its great ones: this comes of the world's old-established necessity to worship: and, indeed, whom but its great ones, that "like celestial fire-pillars go before it on the march," ought it to worship? Blame not even that mistaken worship of sham great ones, that are not celestial fire-pillars, but terrestrial glass-lanterns with wick and tallow, under no guidance but a stupid fatuous one; of which worship the litanies and gossip-homilies are, in some quarters of the globe, so inexpressibly uninteresting. Blame it not; pity it rather, with a certain loving respect.

'Man is never, let me assure thee, altogether a clothes-horse: under the clothes there is always a body and a soul. The Count von Bügeleisen, so idolised by our fashionable classes, is not, as the English Swift asserts, created wholly by the Tailor; but partially also by the supernatural Powers. His beautifully-cut apparel, and graceful expensive tackle and environment of all kinds, are but the symbols of a beauty and gracefulness, supposed to be inherent in the Count himself; under which predicament come also our reverence for his counthood, and in good part that other notable phenomenon of his being worshipped because he *is* worshipped, of one idolater, sheep-like, running after him, because many have already run. Nay, on what other principle but this latter hast thou, O reader (if thou be not one of a thousand), read, for example, thy *Homer*, and found some real joy therein? All these things, I say, the apparel, the counthood, the existing popularity and whatever else can combine there, are symbols;—bank-notes, which, whether there be gold behind them, or only bankruptcy and empty drawers, pass current for gold. But how, now, could they so pass, if gold itself were not prized, and believed and known to be somewhere extant? Produce the actual gold visibly, and mark how, in these distrustful days, your most accredited bank-paper stagnates in the market! No Holy Alliance, though plush and gilding and genealogical parch-

ment, to the utmost that the time yields, be hung round it, can gain for itself a dominion in the heart of any man; some thirty or forty millions of men's hearts being, on the other hand, subdued into loyal reverence by a Corsican Lieutenant of Artillery. Such is the difference between God-creation and Tailor-creation. Great is the Tailor, but not the greatest. So, too, in matters spiritual, what avails it that a man be Doctor of the Sorbonne, Doctor of Laws, of Both Laws; and can cover half a square foot in pica-type with the list of his fellowships, arranged as equilateral triangle, at the vertex an "&c." over and above, and with the parchment of his diplomas could thatch the whole street he lives in: what avails it? The man is but an owl; of prepossessing gravity, indeed; much respected by simple neighbours; but to whose sorrowful hootings no creature hastens, eager to listen. While, again, let but some riding gauger arrive under cloud of night at a Scottish inn, and word be whispered that it is Robert Burns; in few instants all beds and trucklebeds, from garret to cellar, are left vacant, and gentle and simple, with open eyes and erect ears, are gathered together.'

Whereby, at least, from amid this questionable *lingua*, 'more like a jargon than a language,' so much may have become apparent: What unspeakable importance the world attaches, has ever attached (expressing the same by all possible methods) and will ever attach, to its great men. Deep and venerable, whether looked at in the Teufelsdröckh manner or otherwise, is this love of men for great men, this their exclusive admiration of great men; a quality of vast significance, if we consider it well; for, as in its origin it reaches up into the highest and even holiest provinces of man's nature, so in his practical history it will be found to play the most surprising part. Does not, for one example, the fact of such a temper indestructibly existing in all men, point out man as an essentially governable and teachable creature, and forever refute that calumny of his being by

nature insubordinate, prone to rebellion? Men seldom, or rather never for a length of time and deliberately, rebel against anything that does not deserve rebelling against. Ready, ever zealous is the obedience and devotedness they show to the great, to the really high; prostrating their whole possession and self, body, heart, soul and spirit, under the feet of whatsoever is authentically above them. Nay, in most times, it is rather a slavish devotedness to those who only seem and pretend to be above them that constitutes their fault.

But why seek special instances? Is not Love, from of old, known to be the beginning of all things? And what is admiration of the great but love of the truly lovable? The first product of love is *imitation*, that all-important peculiar gift of man, whereby Mankind is not only held socially together in the present time, but connected in like union with the past and the future; so that the attainment of the innumerable Departed can be conveyed down to the Living, and transmitted with increase to the Unborn. Now great men, in particular spiritually great men (for all men have a spirit to guide, though all have not kingdoms to govern and battles to fight), are the men universally imitated and learned of, the glass in which whole generations survey and shape themselves.

Thus is the Great Man of an age, beyond comparison, the most important phenomenon therein; all other phenomena, were they Waterloo Victories, Constitutions of the Year One, glorious revolutions, new births of the golden age in what sort you will, are small and trivial. Alas, all these pass away, and are left extinct behind, like the tar-barrels they were celebrated with; and the new-born golden age proves always to be still-born: neither is there, was there or will there be any other golden age possible, save only in this: in new increase of worth and wisdom;—that is to say, therefore, in the new arrival among us of wise and worthy men. Such arrivals are the great occurrences, though un-

noticed ones; all else that can occur, in what kind soever, is but the *road*, up-hill or down-hill, rougher or smoother; nowise the *power* that will nerve us for travelling forward thereon. So little comparatively can forethought or the cunningest mechanical precontrivance do for a nation, for a world! Ever must we wait on the bounty of Time, and see what leader shall be born for us, and whither he will lead.

Thus too, in defect of great men, noted men become important: the Noted Man of an age is the emblem and living summary of the Ideal which that age has fashioned for itself: show me the noted man of an age, you show me the age that produced him. Such figures walk in the van, for great good or for great evil; if not leading, then driven and still farther misleading. The apotheosis of Beau Brummel has marred many a pretty youth; landed him not at any *goal* where oak garlands, earned by faithful labour and valour, carry men to the immortal gods; but, by a fatal inversion, at the King's Bench *gaol*, where he that has never sowed shall not any longer reap, still less any longer burn his barn, but scrape himself with potsherds among the ashes thereof, and consider with all deliberation 'what he wanted, and what he wants.'

To enlighten this principle of reverence for the great, to teach us reverence, and whom we are to revere and admire, should ever be a chief aim of Education (indeed it is herein that instruction properly both begins and ends); and in these late ages, perhaps more than ever, so indispensable is now our need of clear reverence, so inexpressibly poor our supply. 'Clear reverence!' it was once responded to a seeker of light: 'all want it, perhaps thou thyself.' What wretched idols, of Leeds cloth, stuffed out with bran of one kind or other, do men either worship, or being tired of worshipping (so expensively without fruit), rend in pieces and kick out of doors, amid loud shouting and crowing, what they call 'tremendous cheers,' as if the feat were miraculous! In private life, as in

public, delusion of this sort does its work; the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.

'For, alas,' cries Teufelsdröckh on this occasion, 'though in susceptive hearts it is felt that a great man is unspeakably great, the specific marks of him are mournfully mistaken: thus must innumerable pilgrims journey, in toil and hope, to shrines where there is no healing. On the fairer half of the creation, above all, such error presses hard. Women are born worshippers; in their good little hearts lies the most craving relish for greatness: it is even said, each chooses her husband on the hypothesis of his being a great man—in his way. The good creatures, yet the foolish! For their choices, no insight, or next to none, being vouchsafed them, are unutterable. Yet how touching also to see, for example, Parisian ladies of quality, all rustling in silks and laces, visit the condemned-cell of a fierce Cartouche; and in silver accents, and with the looks of angels, beg locks of hair from him; as from the greatest, were it only in the profession of highwayman! Still more fatal is that other mistake, the commonest of all, whereby the devotional youth, seeking for a great man to worship, finds such within his own worthy person, and proceeds with all zeal to worship *there*. Unhappy enough: to realise, in an age of such gas-light illumination, this basest superstition of the ages of Egyptian darkness!

'Remark, however, not without emotion, that of all rituals and divine services and ordinances ever instituted for the worship of any god, this of Self-worship is the ritual most faithfully observed. Trouble enough has the Hindoo devotee, with his washings and cookings and perplexed formularies, tying him up at every function of his existence: but is it greater trouble than that of his German self-worshipping brother; is it trouble even by the devoutest Fakir, so honestly undertaken and fulfilled? I answer, No; for the German's heart is in it. The German worshipper, for whom does he work, and scheme, and struggle, and fight, at his rising up and lying down, in all times and places, but for his god only?

Can he escape from that divine presence of Self; can his heart waver, or his hand wax faint in that sacred service? The Hebrew Jonah, prophet as he was, rather than take a message to Nineveh, took ship to Tarshish, hoping to hide there from his Sender; but in what ship-hull or whale's belly shall the madder German Jonah cherish hope of hiding from —Himself! Consider, too, the temples he builds, and the services of (shoulder-knotted) priests he ordains and maintains; the smoking sacrifices, thrice a day or oftener, with perhaps a psalmist or two of broken-winded laureats and literators, if such are to be had. Nor are his votive gifts wanting, of rings and jewels and gold embroideries, such as our Lady of Loretto might grow yellower to look upon. A toilsome, perpetual worship, heroically gone through: and then with what issue? Alas, with the worst. The old Egyptian leek-worshipper had, it is to be hoped, seasons of light and faith: his leek-god seems to smile on him; he is humbled, and in humility exalted, before the majesty of something, were it only that of germinative Physical Nature, seen through a germinating, not unnourishing potherb. The Self-worshipper, again, has no seasons of light, which are not of blue sulphur-light; hungry, envious pride, not humility in any sort, is the ashy fruit of his worship; his self-god growls on him with the perpetual wolf-cry, Give! Give! and your devout Byron, as the Frau Hunt, with a wise simplicity (*geistreich naiv*), once said, "must sit sulking like a great schoolboy, in pet because they have given him a plain bun and not a spiced one."—His bun was a life-rent of God's universe, with the tasks it offered, and the tools to do them with; *à priori*, one might have fancied it could be put up with for once.'

After which wondrous glimpses into the Teufelsdröckh Homily on the *Greatness of Great Men*, it may now be high time to proceed with the matter more in hand; and remark that our own much-calumniated age, so fruitful in noted men,

is also not without its great. In noted men, undoubtedly enough, we surpass all ages since the creation of the world; and from two plain causes: First, that there has been a French Revolution, and that there is now pretty rapidly proceeding a European Revolution; whereby everything, as in the Term-day of a great city, when all mortals are removing, has been, so to speak, set out into the street; and many a foolish vessel of dishonour, unnoticed and worth no notice in its own dark corner, has become universally recognisable when once mounted on the summit of some furniture-wagon, and tottering there (as Committee-president, or other head-director), with what is put under it, slowly onward to its new lodging and arrangement, itself, alas, hardly to get thither without *breakage*. Secondly, that the Printing Press, with stitched and loose leaves, has now come into full action; and makes, as it were, a sort of universal daylight, for removal and revolution and everything else to proceed in, far more commodiously, yet also far more conspicuously. A complaint has accordingly been heard that famous men abound, that we are quite overrun with famous men: however, the remedy lies in the disease itself; crowded succession already means quick oblivion. For wagon after wagon rolls off, and either arrives or is overset; and so, in either case, the vessel of dishonour, which, at worst, we saw only in crossing some street, will afflict us no more.

Of great men, among so many millions of noted men, it is computed that in our time there have been Two; one in the practical, another in the speculative province: Napoleon Buonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In which dual number, inconsiderable as it is, our time may perhaps specially pride itself, and take precedence of many others; in particular, reckon itself the flowertime of the whole last century and half. Every age will, no doubt, have its superior man or men; but one *so* superior as to take rank among the high of all ages, this is what we call a great man; this rarely makes his appearance, such bounty of Nature and

Accident must combine to produce and unfold him. Of Napoleon and his works all ends of the world have heard: for *such* a host marched not in silence through the frightened deep: few heads there are in this Planet which have not formed to themselves some featured or featureless image of him; his history has been written about, on the great scale and on the small, some millions of times, and still remains to be written: one of our highest literary problems. For such a 'light-nimbus' of glory and renown encircled the man; the environment he walked in was itself so stupendous, that the eye grew dazzled, and mistook his proportions; or quite turned away from him in pain and temporary blindness. Thus even among the clear-sighted there is no unanimity about Napoleon; and only here and there does his own greatness begin to be interpreted, and accurately separated from the mere greatness of his fame and fortune.

Goethe, again, though of longer continuance in the world, and intrinsically of much more unquestionable greatness and even importance there, could not be so noted by the world: for if the explosion of powder-mines and artillery-parks naturally attracts every eye and ear; the approach of a new-created star (dawning on us, in new-created radiance, from the eternal Deeps!), though *this*, and not the artillery-parks, is to shape our destiny and *rule* the lower earth, is notable at first only to certain stargazers and weather-prophets. Among ourselves especially, Goethe had little recognition: indeed, it was only of late that his existence, as a man and not as a mere sound, became authentically known to us; and some shadow of his high endowments and endeavours, and of the high meaning that might lie therein, arose in the general mind of England, even of intelligent England. Five years ago, to rank him with Napoleon, like him as rising unattainable beyond his class, like him and more than he of quite peculiar moment to all Europe, would have seemed a wonderful procedure; candour even, and enlightened liberality, to grant him place beside this and the other home-born ready-

writer, blessed with that special privilege of 'English cultivation,' and able thereby to write novels, heart-captivating, heart-rending, or of enchaining interest.

Since which time, however, let us say, the progress of clearer apprehension has been rapid and satisfactory: innumerable unmusical voices have already fallen silent on this matter; for in fowls of every feather, even in the pertest choughs and thievish magpies, there dwells a singular reverence of the eagle; no Dulness is so courageous, but if you once show it any gleam of a heavenly Resplendence, it will, at lowest, shut its eyes and say nothing. So fares it here with the old-established British critic; who, indeed, in these days of ours, begins to be strangely situated; so many new things rising on his horizon, black indefinable shapes, magical or not; the old brickfield (where he kneaded insufficient marketable bricks) all stirring under his feet; preternatural, mad-making tones in the earth and air;—with all which what shall an old-established British critic and brickmaker do, but, at wisest, put his hands in his pockets, and, with the face and heart of a British mastiff, though amid dismal enough forebodings, see what it will turn to?

In the younger, more hopeful minds, again, in most minds that can be considered as in a state of growth, German literature is taking its due place: in such, and in generations of other such that are to follow them, some thankful appreciation of the greatest in German literature cannot fail; at all events this feeling that he *is* great and the greatest, whereby appreciation, and what alone is of much value, appropriation, first becomes rightly possible. To forward such on their way towards appropriating what excellence this man realised and created for them, somewhat has already been done, yet not much; much still waits to be done. The field, indeed, is large: there are Forty Volumes of the most significant Writing that has been produced for the last two centuries; there is the whole long Life and heroic Character of him who produced them; all this to expatiate over and inquire into; in

both which departments the deepest thinker, and most far-sighted, may find scope enough.

Nevertheless, in these days of the ten-pound franchise, when all the world (perceiving now, like the Irish innkeeper, that 'death and destruction are just coming in') will have itself represented in parliament; and the wits of so many are gone in this direction to gather wool, and must needs return more or less shorn; it were foolish to invite either young or old into great depths of thought on such a remote matter; the tendency of which is neither for the Reform Bill nor against it, but quietly *through* it and beyond it; nowise to prescribe this or that mode of *electing* members, but only to produce a few members *worth* electing. Not for many years (who knows how many!) in these harassed, hand-to-mouth circumstances, can the world's bleared eyes open themselves to study the true import of such topics; of this topic, the highest of such. As things actually stand, some quite cursory glances, and considerations close on the surface, to remind a few (unelected, unelective) parties interested, that it lies over for study, are all that can be attempted here: could we, by any method, in any measure, disclose for such the wondrous wonder-working *element* it hovers in, the *light* it is to be studied and inquired-after in, what is needfulest at present were accomplished.

One class of considerations, near enough the surface, we avoid; all that partakes of an elegiac character. True enough, nothing can be *done* or suffered, but there is something to be *said*, wisely or unwisely. The departure of our Greatest contemporary Man could not be other than a great event; fitted to awaken, in all who with understanding beheld it, feelings sad, but high and sacred, of mortality and immortality, of mourning and of triumph; far lookings into the Past and into the Future,—so many changes, fearful and wonderful, of fleeting Time; glimpses too of the Eternity these rest on, which knows no change. At the present date and distance, however, all this pertains not to us; has been

uttered elsewhere, or may be left for utterance there. Let us consider the Exequies as past; that the high Rogus, with its sweet-scented wood, amid the wail of music eloquent to speechless hearts, has flamed aloft, heaven-kissing, in sight of all the Greeks; and that now the ashes of the Hero are gathered into their urn, and the host has marched onwards to new victories and new toils; ever to be mindful of the dead, not to mourn for him any more. The host of the Greeks, in this case, was all thinking Europe: whether their funeral games were appropriate and worthy, we stop not to inquire; the time, in regard to such things, is empty or ill-provided, and this was what the time could conveniently do. All canonisation and solemn cremation are gone by; and as yet nothing suitable, nothing that does not border upon parody, has appeared in their room. A Bentham bequeaths his remains to be lectured over in a school of anatomy; and perhaps, even in this way, finds, as chief of the Utilitarians, a really nobler funeral than any other, which the prosaic age, rich only in crapes and hollow scutcheons (of timber as of words), could have afforded him.

The matter in hand being *Goethe's Works*, and the greatest work of every man, or rather the summary and net amount of all his works, being the Life he has led, we ask, as the first question: How it went with Goethe in that matter; what was the practical basis, of want and fulfilment, of joy and sorrow, from which his spiritual productions grew forth; the characters of which they must more or less legibly bear? In which sense, those Volumes entitled by him *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, wherein his personal history, what he has thought fit to make known of it, stands delineated, will long be valuable. A noble commentary, instructive in many ways, lies opened there, and yearly increasing in worth and interest; which all readers, now when the true quality of it is ascertained, will rejoice that circumstances induced and allowed him to write: for surely if old Cellini's counsel have

any propriety, it is doubly proper in this case: the autobiographic practice he recommends (of which the last century in particular has seen so many worthy and worthless examples) was never so much in place as here. 'All men, of what rank soever,' thus counsels the brave Benvenuto,'who have accomplished aught virtuous or virtuous-like, should, provided they be conscious of really good purposes, write down their own life: nevertheless, not put hand to so worthy an enterprise till after they have reached the age of forty.' All which ukase-regulations Goethe had abundantly fulfilled,—the last as abundantly as any, for he had now reached the age of sixty-two.

'This year, 1811,' says he, 'distinguishes itself for me by persevering outward activity. The *Life of Philip Hackert* went to press; the papers committed to me all carefully elaborated as the case required. By this task I was once more attracted to the South: the occurrences which, at that period, had befallen me there, in Hackert's company or neighbourhood, became alive in the imagination; I had cause to ask, Why this which I was doing for another should not be attempted for myself? I turned, accordingly, before completion of that volume, to my own earliest personal history; and, in truth, found here that I had delayed too long. The work should have been undertaken while my mother yet lived; thereby had I got nigher those scenes of childhood, and been, by her great strength of memory, transported into the midst of them. Now, however, must these vanished apparitions be recalled by my own help; and first, with labour, many an incitement to recollection, like a necessary magic apparatus, be devised. To represent the development of a child who had grown to be remarkable, how this exhibited itself under given circumstances, and yet how in general it could content the student of human nature and his views: such was the thing I had to do.

'In this sense, unpretendingly enough, to a work treated with anxious fidelity, I gave the name *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (Truth and Fiction); deeply convinced that man in immediate Presence, still more in Remembrance, fashions and models the external world according to his own peculiarities.

'The business, as, with historical studying, and otherwise recalling of places and persons, I had much time to spend on it, busied me wheresoever I went or stood, at home and abroad, to such a degree that my actual condition became like a secondary matter; though again, on all

hands, when summoned outwards by occasion, I with full force and undivided sense proved myself present.'[1]

These Volumes, with what other supplementary matter has been added to them (the rather as Goethe's was a life of manifold relation, of the widest connexion with important or elevated persons, not to be carelessly laid before the world, and he had the rare good fortune of arranging all things that regarded even his posthumous concernment with the existing generation, according to his own deliberate judgment), are perhaps likely to be, for a long time, our only authentic reference. By the last will of the deceased, it would seem, all his papers and effects are to lie exactly as they are, till after another twenty years.

Looking now into these magically-recalled scenes of childhood and manhood, the student of human nature will under all manner of shapes, from first to last, note one thing: The singularly complex Possibility offered from without, yet along with it the deep never-failing Force from within, whereby all this is conquered and realised. It was as if accident and primary endowment had conspired to produce a character on the great scale; a will is cast abroad into the widest, wildest element, and gifted also in an extreme degree to prevail over this, to fashion this to its own form: in which subordinating and self-fashioning of its circumstances a character properly consists. In external situations, it is true, in occurrences such as could be recited in the Newspapers, Goethe's existence is not more complex than other men's; outwardly rather a pacific smooth existence: but in his inward specialties and depth of faculty and temper, in his position spiritual and temporal towards the world as it was, and the world as he could have wished it, the observant eye may discern complexity, perplexity enough; an extent of data greater, perhaps, than had lain in any life-problem for some centuries. And now, as mentioned, the force for solving this was, in like manner, granted him in extraordinary measure; so that we

[1] *Werke*, xxxii. 62.

must say, his possibilities were faithfully and with wonderful success turned into acquisitions; and this man fought the good fight, not only victorious, as all true men are, but victorious without damage, and with an ever-increasing strength for new victory, as only great and happy men are. Not wounds and loss (beyond fast-healing skin-deep wounds) has the unconquerable to suffer; only ever-enduring toil; weariness,—from which, after rest, he will rise stronger than before.

Good fortune, what the world calls good fortune, awaits him from beginning to end; but also a far deeper felicity than this. Such worldly gifts of good fortune are what we call possibilities: happy he that can rule over them; but *doubly* unhappy he that cannot. Only in virtue of good guidance does that same good fortune prove good. Wealth, health, fiery light with Proteus many-sidedness of mind, peace, honour, length of days: with all this you may make no Goethe, but only some Voltaire; with the most that was fortuitous in all this, make only some short-lived, unhappy, unprofitable Byron.

At no period of the World's History can a gifted man be born when he will not find enough to do; in no circumstances come into life but there will be contradictions for him to reconcile, difficulties which it will task his whole strength to surmount, if his whole strength suffice. Everywhere the human soul stands between a hemisphere of light and another of darkness; on the confines of two everlastingly hostile empires, Necessity and Freewill. A pious adage says, 'the back is made for the burden'; we might with no less truth invert it, and say, the burden was made for the back. Nay, so perverse is the nature of man, it has in all times been found that an external allotment superior to the common was more dangerous than one inferior; thus for a hundred that can bear adversity, there is hardly one that can bear prosperity.

Of riches, in particular, as of the grossest species of prosperity, the perils are recorded by all moralists; and ever, as

of old, must the sad observation from time to time occur: Easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle! Riches in a cultured community are the strangest of things; a power all-moving, yet which any the most powerless and skilless can *put* in motion; they are the *readiest* of possibilities; the readiest to become a great blessing or a great curse. 'Beneath gold thrones and mountains,' says Jean Paul, 'who knows how many giant spirits lie entombed!' The first fruit of riches, especially for the man born rich, is to teach him faith in them, and all but hide from him that there is any other faith: thus is he trained up in the miserable eye-service of what is called Honour, Respectability; instead of a man we have but a *gigman*,—one who 'always kept a gig,' two-wheeled or four-wheeled. Consider, too, what this same gigmanhood issues in; consider that first and most stupendous of gigmen, Phaeton, the son of Sol, who drove the brightest of all conceivable gigs, yet with the sorrowfulest result. Alas, Phaeton was his father's heir; born to attain the highest fortune without earning it: he had *built* no sun-chariot (could not build the simplest wheelbarrow), but could and would insist on *driving* one; and so broke his own stiff neck, sent gig and horses spinning through infinite space, and set the universe on fire!—Or, to speak in more modest figures, Poverty, we may say, surrounds a man with ready-made barriers, which, if they mournfully gall and hamper, do at least prescribe for him and force on him a sort of course and goal; a safe and beaten though a circuitous course; great part of his guidance is secure against fatal error, is withdrawn from *his* control. The rich, again, has his whole life to guide, without goal or barrier, save of his own choosing; and tempted as we have seen, is too likely to guide it ill; often, instead of walking straight forward, as he might, does but, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick; in which process, it is clear, not the adamantine circle of Necessity whereon the World is built, but only his own limb-bones must go to pieces!—Truly, in plain prose, if we bethink us

what a road many a Byron and Mirabeau, especially in these latter generations, have gone, it is proof of an uncommon inward wealth in Goethe, that the outward wealth, whether of money or other happiness which Fortune offered him, did in no case exceed the power of Nature to appropriate and wholesomely assimilate; that all outward blessedness grew to inward strength, and produced only blessed effects for him. Those 'gold mountains' of Jean Paul, to the giant that *can* rise above them, are excellent, both fortified and speculatory, heights; and do in fact become a *throne*, where happily they have not been a *tomb*.

Goethe's childhood is throughout of riant, joyful character: kind plenty in every sense, security, affection, manifold excitement, instruction encircles him; wholly an element of sun and azure, wherein the young spirit, awakening and attaining, can on all hands richly unfold itself. A beautiful boy, of earnest, lucid, serenely deep nature, with the peaceful completeness yet infinite incessant expansiveness of a boy, has, in the fittest environment, begun to *be*: beautiful he looks and moves; rapid, gracefully prompt, like the son of Maia; wise, noble, like Latona's son: nay, (as all men may *now* see) he is, in very truth, a miniature incipient World-Poet; of all heavenly figures the beautifulest we know of that can visit this lower earth. Lovely enough shine for us those young years in old Teutonic Frankfort; mirrored in the far remembrance of the Self-historian, real yet ideal, they are among our most genuine poetic Idyls. No smallest matter is too small for us, when we think *who* it was that did it or suffered it. The little long-clothed urchin, mercurial enough with all his stillness, can throw a whole cargo of new-marketed crockery, piece by piece, from the balcony into the street, when once the feat is suggested to him; and comically shatters cheap delf-ware with the same right hand which tragically wrote and hurled forth the demoniac scorn of Mephistopheles, or as 'right hand' of Faust, 'smote the universe to ruins.' Neither smile more than enough (if thou be wise) that the

grey-haired all-experienced man remembers how the boy walked on the Mayn bridge, and 'liked to look at the bright weather-cock' on the barrier there. That foolish piece of gilt wood, there glittering sunlit, with its reflex wavering in the Mayn waters, is awakening quite another glitter in the young gifted soul: is not this foolish sunlit splendour also, now when there is an *eye* to behold it, one of Nature's doings? The eye of the young seer is here, through the paltriest chink, looking into the infinite Splendours of Nature, —where, one day, himself is to enter and dwell.

Goethe's mother appears to have been the more gifted of the parents: a woman of altogether genial character, great spiritual faculty and worth; whom the son, at an after-time, put old family friends in mind of. It is gratifying for us that she lived to witness his maturity in works and honours; to know that the little infant she had nursed was grown to be a mighty man, the first man of his nation and time. In the father, as prosperous citizen of Frankfort, skilled in many things; improved by travel, by studies both practical and ornamental; decorated with some diplomatic title, but passing, among his books, paintings, collections and household possessions, social or intellectual, spiritual or material, a quite undiplomatic independent life, we become acquainted with a German, not country- but city-*gentleman* of the last century; a character scarcely ever familiar in our Islands; now perhaps almost obsolete among the Germans too. A positive, methodical man, sound-headed, honest-hearted, sharp-tempered; with an uncommon share of volition, among other things, so that scarcely any obstacle would turn him back, but whatsoever he could not mount over he would struggle round, and in any case *be* at the end of his journey: many or all of whose good qualities passed also over by inheritance; and, in fairer combination, on nobler objects, to the whole world's profit, were seen a second time in action.

Family incidents; house-buildings, or rebuildings; arrivals, departures; in any case, newyear's-days and birthdays, are not

wanting; nor city-incidents; many-coloured tumult of Frankfort fairs; Kaisers' coronations, expected and witnessed; or that glorious ceremonial of the yearly *Pfeiffergericht*, wherein the grandfather himself plays so imperial a part. World-incidents too roll forth their billows into the remotest creek, and alter the current there. The Earthquake of Lisbon hurls the little Frankfort boy into wondrous depths of another sort; enunciating dark theological problems, which no theology of his will solve. Direction, instruction, in like manner, awaits him in the Great Frederic's Seven-Years War; especially in that long billeting of King's Lieutenant Comte de Thorane, with his sergeants and adjutants, with his painters and picture-easels, his quick precision and decision, his 'dry gallantry' and stately Spanish bearing;—though collisions with the 'house-father,' whose German house-stairs (though he silently endures the inevitable) were not new-built to be made a French highway of; who besides loves not the French, but the great invincible Fritz they are striving to beat down. Think, for example, of that singular congratulation on the Victory at Bergen:

'So then, at last, after a restless Passion-week, Passion-Friday, 1759, arrived. A deep stillness announced the approaching storm. We children were forbidden to leave the house; our father had no rest, and went out. The battle began; I mounted to the top story, where the field indeed was still out of my sight, but the thunder of the cannon and the volleys of the small arms could be fully discerned. After some hours, we saw the first tokens of the battle, in a row of wagons, whereon wounded men, in all sorts of sorrowful dismemberment and gesture, were driven softly past us to the Liebfrauen-Kloster, which had been changed into a hospital. The compassion of the citizens forthwith awoke. Beer, wine, bread, money were given to such as had still power of receiving. But when, erelong, wounded and captive Germans also were noticed in that train, the pity had no limits; it seemed as if each were bent to strip himself of whatever movable thing he had, to aid his countrymen therewith in their extremity.

'The prisoners, meanwhile, were the symptoms of a battle unprosperous for the Allies. My father, in his partiality, quite certain that these would gain, had the passionate rashness to go out to meet the expected visitors; not reflecting that the beaten side would in that case have to

run over him. He went first into his garden, at the Friedberg Gate, where he found all quiet and solitary; then ventured forth to the Bornheim Heath, where soon, however, various scattered outrunners and baggage-men came in sight, who took the satisfaction, as they passed, of shooting at the boundary-stones, and sent our eager wanderer the reverberated lead singing about his ears. He reckoned it wiser, therefore, to come back; and learned on some inquiry, what the sound of the firing might already have taught him, that for the French all went well, and no retreat was thought of. Arriving home full of black humour, he quite, at sight of his wounded and prisoner countrymen, lost all composure. From him also many a gift went out for the passing wagons, but only Germans were to taste of it; which arrangement, as Fate had so huddled friends and foes together, could not always be adhered to.

'Our mother, and we children, who had from the first built upon the Count's word, and so passed a tolerably quiet day, were greatly rejoiced, and our mother doubly comforted, as she that morning, on questioning the oracle of her jewel-box by the scratch of a needle, had obtained a most consolatory answer not only for the present but for the future. We wished our father a similar belief and disposition; we flattered him what we could, we entreated him to take some food, which he had forborne all day; he refused our caresses and every enjoyment, and retired to his room. Our joy, in the mean while, was not disturbed; the business was over: the King's Lieutenant, who to-day, contrary to custom, had been on horseback, at length returned; his presence at home was more needful than ever. We sprang out to meet him, kissed his hands, testified our joy. It seemed to please him greatly. "Well!" said he, with more softness than usual, "I am glad too for your sake, dear children." He ordered us sweetmeats, sweet wine, everything the best, and went to his chamber, where already a mass of importuners, solicitors, petitioners, were crowded.

'We held now a dainty collation; deplored our good father, who could not participate therein, and pressed our mother to bring him down; she, however, knew better, and how uncheering such gifts would be to him. Meanwhile she had put some supper in order, and would fain have sent him up a little to his room; but such irregularity was a thing he never suffered, not in extremest cases; so the sweet gifts being once put aside, she set about entreating him to come down in his usual way. He yielded at last, unwillingly, and little did we know what mischief we were making ready. The stairs ran free through the whole house, past the door of every ante-chamber. Our father, in descending, had to pass the Count's apartments. His ante-chamber was so full of people that he had at length resolved to come out, and despatch several at once; and this happened, alas, just at the instant our father was pass-

ing down. The Count stept cheerfully out, saluted him and said: "You will congratulate us and yourself that this dangerous affair has gone off so happily."—"Not at all!" replied my father, with grim emphasis: "I wish they had chased you to the Devil, had I myself gone too." The Count held-in for a moment, then burst forth with fury: "You shall repent this! You shall not"——'

—Father Goethe, however, has 'in the mean while quietly descended,' and sat down to sup much cheerfuller than formerly; he little caring, 'we little knowing, in what questionable way he had rolled the stone from his heart,' and how official friends must interfere, and secret negotiations enough go on, to keep him out of military prison, and worse things that might have befallen there. On all which may we be permitted once again to make the simple reflection: What a plagued and plaguing world, with its battles and bombardments, wars and rumours of war (which sow or reap no ear of corn for any man), this is! The boy, who here watches the musket-volleys and cannon-thunders of the great Fritz, shall, as man, witness the siege of Mentz; fly with Brunswick Dukes before Dumouriez and his Sansculottes, through a country champed into one red world of mud, 'like Pharaoh' (for the carriage too breaks down) 'through the Red Sea'; and finally become involved in the universal fire-consummation of Napoleon, and by skill defend himself from hurt therein!

The father, with occasional subsidiary private tutors, is his son's schoolmaster; a somewhat pedantic pedagogue, with ambition enough and faithful goodwill, but more of rigour than of insight; who, however, works on a subject that he *cannot* spoil. Languages, to the number of six or seven, with whatsoever pertains to them; histories, syllabuses, knowledges-made-easy; not to speak of dancing, drawing, music, or, in due time, riding and fencing: all is taken-in with boundless appetite and aptitude; all is but fuel, injudiciously piled and of wet quality, yet under which works an unquenchable Greek-fire that will feed itself therewith, that will one day make it *all* clear and glowing. The paternal grandmother, recollected as a 'pale, thin, ever white and clean-dressed figure,' provides

the children many a satisfaction; and at length, on some festive night, the crowning one of a puppet-show: whereupon ensues a long course of theatrical speculatings and practisings, somewhat as delineated, for another party, in the first book of *Meister's Apprenticeship*; in which Work, indeed, especially in the earlier portion of it, some shadow of the author's personal experience and culture is more than once traceable. Thus Meister's desperate burnt-offering of his young 'Poems on various Occasions,' was the image of a reality which took place in Leipzig; performed desperately enough, 'on the kitchen hearth, the thick smoke from which, flowing through the whole house, filled our good landlady with alarm.'

Old Imperial-Freetown Frankfort is not without its notabilities, tragic or comic; in any case, impressive and didactic. The young heart is filled with boding to look into the *Judengasse* (Jew-gate), where squalid painful Hebrews are banished to scour old clothes, and in hate, and greed, and Old-Hebrew obstinacy and implacability, work out a wonderful prophetic existence, as 'a people terrible from the beginning'; manages, however, to get admittance to their synagogue, and see a weuding and a circumcision. On its spike, aloft on one of the steeples, grins, for the last two-hundred years, the bleached skull of a malefactor and traitor; properly, indeed, not so much a traitor, as a Radical whose Reform Bill could not be carried through. The future book-writer also, on one occasion, sees the execution of a book; how the huge printed reams rustle in the flames, are stirred-up with oven-forks, and fly half-charred aloft, the sport of winds; from which half-charred leaves, diligently picked up, he pieces himself a copy together, as did many others, and with double earnestness reads it.

As little is the old Freetown deficient in notable men; all accessible to a grandson of the Schultheiss,[1] who besides is a

[1] *Schultheiss* is the title of the chief magistrate in some free-towns and republics, for instance, in Berne too. It seems to derive itself from *Schuldheissen*, and may mean the Teller of Duty, him by whom what *should* be is *hight*.

youth like no other. Of which originals, curious enough, and long since 'vanished from the sale-catalogues,' take only these two specimens:

'Von Reineck, of an old-noble house; able, downright, but stiff-necked; a lean black-brown man, whom I never saw smile. The misfortune befel him that his only daughter was carried-off by a friend of the family. He prosecuted his son-in-law with the most vehement suit; and as the courts, in their formality, would neither fast enough nor with force enough obey his vengeance, he fell-out with them; and there arose quarrel on quarrel, process on process. He withdrew himself wholly into his house and the adjoining garden, lived in a spacious but melancholy under-room, where for many years no brush of a painter, perhaps scarcely the besom of a maid, had got admittance. Me he would willingly endure; had specially recommended me to his younger son. His oldest friends, who knew how to humour him, his men of business and agents he often had at table: and, on such occasions, he failed not to invite me. His board was well furnished, his buffet still better. His guests, however, had one torment, a large stove smoking out of many cracks. One of the most intimate ventured once to take notice of it, and ask the host whether he could stand such an inconvenience the whole winter. He answered, like a second Timon, and Heautontimorumenos: "Would to God this were the worst mischief of those that plague me!" Not till late would he be persuaded to admit daughter and grandson to his sight: the son-in-law was never more to show face before him.

'On this brave and unfortunate man my presence had a kind effect; for as he gladly spoke with me, in particular instructed me on political and state concerns, he seemed himself to feel assuaged and cheered. Accordingly, the few old friends who still kept about him, would often make use of me when they wished to soothe his indignant humour, and persuade him to any recreation. In fact he now more than once went out with us, and viewed the neighbourhood again, on which, for so many years, he had not turned an eye.' * * *

'Hofrath Huisgen, not a native of Frankfort; of the Reformed religion, and thus incapable of public office, of advocacy among the rest, which latter, however, as a man much trusted for juristic talent, he, under another's signature, contrived quite calmly to practise, as well in Frankfort as in the Imperial Courts,—might be about sixty when I happened to have writing-lessons along with his son, and so came into the house. His figure was large; tall without being bony, broad without corpulency. His face, deformed not only by small-pox, but wanting one of the eyes, you could not look on, for the first time, without apprehension. On his bald head he wore always a perfectly white

bell-shaped cap (*Glockenmütze*) tied at top with a ribbon. His night-gowns, of calamanco or damask, were always as if new-washed. He inhabited a most cheerful suite of rooms on the ground floor in the *Allee*, and the neatness of everything about him corresponded to it. The high order of his books, papers, maps made a pleasant impression. His son, Heinrich Sebastian, who afterwards became known by various writings on Art, promised little in his youth. Good-natured but heavy, not rude yet artless, and without wish to instruct himself, he sought rather to avoid his father, as from his mother he could get whatever he wanted. I, on the other hand, came more and more into intimacy with the master the more I knew of him. As he meddled with none but important law-cases, he had time enough to amuse and occupy himself with other things. I had not long been about him, and listened to his doctrine, till I came to observe that in respect of God and the World he stood on the opposition side. One of his pet books was *Agrippa de Vanitate Scientiarum*; this he particularly recommended me to read, and did therewith set my young brain, for a while, into considerable tumult. I, in the joy of my youth, was inclined to a sort of optimism, and with God or the Gods had now tolerably adjusted myself again; for, by a series of years, I had got to experience that there is many a balance against evil, that misfortunes are things one recovers from, that in dangers one finds deliverance, and does not always break his neck. On what men did and tried, moreover, I looked with tolerance, and found much praiseworthy which my old gentleman would nowise be content with. Nay, once, as he had been depicting me the world not a little on the crabbed side, I noticed in him that he meant still to finish with a trump-card. He shut, as in such cases his wont was, the blind left eye close; looked with the other broad out; and said, in a snuffling voice: *"Auch in Gott entdeck' ich Fehler."*'

Of a gentle character is the reminiscence of the maternal grandfather, old Schultheiss Textor; with his gift of prophetic dreaming, 'which endowment none of his descendants inherited'; with his kind, mild ways; there as he glides about in his garden, at evening, 'in black-velvet cap,' trimming 'the finer sort of fruit-trees,' with aid of those antique embroidered gloves or gauntlets, yearly handed him at the *Pfeiffergericht*: a soft, spirit-looking figure; the farthest outpost of the Past, which behind him melts into dim vapour. In Frau von Klettenberg, a religious associate of the mother's, we become acquainted with the *Schöne Seele*

(Fair Saint) of *Meister*; she, at an after-period, studied to convert her *Philo*, but only very partially succeeded. Let us notice also, as a token for good, how the young universal spirit takes pleasure in the workshops of handicraftsmen, and loves to understand their methods of labouring and of living:

'My father had early accustomed me to manage little matters for him. In particular, it was often my commission to stir-up the craftsmen he employed; who were too apt to loiter with him; as he wanted to have all accurately done, and finally for prompt payment to have the price moderated. I came, in this way, into almost all manner of workshops; and as it lay in my nature to shape myself into the circumstances of others, to feel every species of human existence, and with satisfaction participate therein, I spent many pleasant hours in such places; grew to understand the procedure of each, and what of joy and of sorrow, advantage or drawback, the indispensable conditions of this or that way of life brought with them. * * * The household economy of the various crafts, which took its figure and colour from the occupation of each, was also silently an object of attention; and so unfolded, so confirmed itself in me the feeling of the equality, if not of all men, yet of all men's situations; existence by itself appearing as the head condition, all the rest as indifferent and accidental.'

And so, amid manifold instructive influences, has the boy grown out of boyhood; when now a new figure enters on the scene, bringing far higher revelations:

'As at last the wine was failing, one of them called the maid; but instead of her there came a maiden of uncommon, and to see her in this environment, of incredible beauty. "What is it?" said she, after kindly giving us good-evening: "the maid is ill and gone to bed: can I serve you?"—"Our wine is done," said one; "couldst thou get us a couple of bottles over the way, it were very good of thee."—"Do it, Gretchen," said another, "it is but a cat's-leap."—"Surely!" said she; took a couple of empty bottles from the table, and hastened out. Her figure, when she turned away from you, was almost prettier than before. The little cap sat so neat on the little head, which a slim neck so gracefully united with back and shoulders. Everything about her seemed select; and you could follow the whole form more calmly, as attention was not now attracted and arrested by the true still eyes and lovely mouth alone.'

It is at the very threshold of youth that this episode of Gretchen (Margarete, Mar-*g'ref'-kin*) occurs; the young critic of slim necks and true still eyes shall now know something of natural magic, and the importance of one mortal to another; the wild-flowing bottomless sea of human Passion, glorious in auroral light (which, alas, may become infernal lightning), unveils itself a little to him. A graceful little episode we reckon it; and Gretchen better than most first-loves: wholly an innocent, wise, dainty maiden; pure and poor,—who vanishes from us here; but, we trust, in some quiet nook of the Rhineland, became wife and mother, and was the joy and sorrow of some brave man's heart, according as it is appointed. To the boy himself it ended painfully, almost fatally, had not sickness come to his deliverance; and here too he may experience how 'a shadow chases us in all manner of sunshine,' and in this *What-d'ye-call-it* of Existence the tragic element is not wanting. The name of Gretchen, not her story, which had nothing in it of that guilt and terror, has been made world-famous in the Play of *Faust*.—

Leipzig University has the honour of matriculating him. The name of his 'propitious mother' she may boast of, but not of the reality: alas, in these days, the University of the Universe is the only propitious mother of such; all other propitious mothers are but unpropitious superannuated dry-nurses fallen bedrid, from whom the famished nurseling has to *steal* even bread and water, if he will not die; whom for most part he soon takes leave of, giving perhaps (as in Gibbon's case), for farewell thanks, some rough tweak of the nose; and rushes desperate into the wide world an orphan. The time is advancing, slower or faster, when the bedrid dry-nurse will decease, and be succeeded by a walking and stirring wet one. Goethe's employments and culture at Leipzig lay in quite other groves than the academic: he listened to the Ciceronian Ernesti with eagerness, but the life-giving word flowed not from his mouth; to the sacerdotal, eclectic-sentimental Gellert (the divinity of all tea-

table moral-philosophers of both sexes); witnessed 'the pure soul, the genuine will of the noble man,' heard 'his admonitions, warnings and entreaties, uttered in a somewhat hollow and melancholy tone'; and then the Frenchman say to it all, "*Laissez le faire; il nous forme des dupes.*" 'In logic it seemed to me very strange that I must now take-up those spiritual operations which from of old I had executed with the utmost convenience, and tatter them asunder, insulate and as if destroy them, that their right employment might become plain to me. Of the Thing, of the World, of God, I fancied I knew almost about as much as the Doctor himself; and he seemed to me, in more than one place, to hobble dreadfully (*gewaltig zu hapern*).'

However, he studies to some profit with the Painter Oeser; hears, one day, at the door, with horror, that there is no lesson, for news of Winkelmann's assassination have come. With the ancient Gottsched, too, he has an interview; alas, it is a young Zeus come to dethrone old Saturn, whose time in the literary heaven is nigh run; for on Olympus itself, one Demiurgus passeth away and another cometh. Gottsched had introduced the reign of *water*, in all shapes liquid and solid, and long gloriously presided over the same; but now there is enough of it, and the 'rayless majesty' (had he been prophetic) here beheld the rayed one, before whom he was to melt away:

'We announced ourselves. The servant led us into a large room, and said his master would come immediately. Whether we misinterpreted a motion he made I cannot say; at any rate, we fancied he had beckoned us to advance into an adjoining chamber. We did advance, and to a singular scene; for, at the same moment, Gottsched, the huge broad gigantic man, entered from the opposite door, in green damask night-gown, lined with red taffeta; but his enormous head was bald and without covering. This, however, was the very want to be now supplied: for the servant came springing-in at the side-door, with a full-bottomed wig on his hand (the locks fell down to his elbow), and held it out, with terrified gesture, to his master. Gottsched, without uttering the smallest complaint, lifted the head-gear with his left hand from the

servant's arm; and very deftly swinging it up to its place on the head, at the same time, with his right hand, gave the poor man a box on the ear, which, as is seen in comedies, dashed him spinning out of the apartment: whereupon the respectable-looking Patriarch quite gravely desired us to be seated, and with proper dignity went through a tolerably long discourse.'

In which discourse, however, it is likely, little edification for the young inquirer could lie. Already by multifarious discoursings and readings he has convinced himself, to his despair, of the watery condition of the Gottschedic world, and how 'the *Noachide* (Noaheid) of Bodmer is a true symbol of the deluge that has swelled-up round the German Parnassus,' and in literature as in philosophy there is neither landmark nor loadstar. Here, too, he resumes his inquiries about religion, falls into 'black scruples' about most things; and in 'the bald and feeble deliverances' propounded him has sorry comfort. Outward things, moreover, go not as they should: the copious philosophic harlequinades of that wag, Beyrish 'with a long nose,' unsettle rather than settle; as do, in many ways, other wise and foolish mortals of both sexes: matters grow worse and worse. He falls sick, becomes wretched enough; yet unfolds withal 'an audacious humour which feels itself superior to the moment, not only fears no danger, but even wilfully courts it.' And thus, somewhat in a wrecked state, he quits his propitious mother, and returns home.

Nevertheless let there be no reflections: he must now in earnest get forward with his Law, and on to Strasburg to complete himself therein; so has the paternal judgment arranged it. A Lawyer, the thing in these latter days called Lawyer, of a man in whom ever-bounteous Nature has sent us a Poet for the World! O blind mortals, blind over what lies closest to us, what we have the truest wish to see! In this young colt that caprioles there in young lustihood, and snuffs the wind with an 'audacious humour,' rather dangerous-looking, no Sleswic Dobbin, to rise to dromedary stature,

and draw three tons avoirdupois (of street-mud or whatever else), has been vouchsafed; but a winged miraculous Pegasus to carry us to the heavens!—Whereon too (if we consider it) many a heroic Bellerophon shall, in times coming, mount, and destroy Chimæras, and deliver afflicted nations on the lower earth.

Meanwhile, be this as it may, the youth is gone to Strasburg to prepare for the *examen rigorosum*; though, as it turned out, for quite a different than the Law one. Confusion enough is in his head and heart; poetic objects too have taken root there, and will not rest till they have worked themselves into form. 'These,' says he, 'were Götz von Berlichingen and Faust. The written Life of the former had seized my inmost soul. The figure of a rude well-meaning self-helper, in wild anarchic time, excited my deepest sympathy. The impressive puppet-show Fable of the other sounded and hummed through me many-toned enough.'—'Let us withdraw, however,' subjoins he, 'into the free air, to the high broad platform of the Minster; as if the time were still here, when we young ones often rendezvoused thither to salute, with full rummers, the sinking sun.' They had good telescopes with them; 'and one friend after another searched out the spot in the distance which had become the dearest to him; neither was I without a little eye-mark of the like, which, though it rose not conspicuous in the landscape, drew me to it beyond all else with a kindly magic.' This alludes, we perceive, to that Alsatian Vicar of Wakefield, and his daughter the fair Frederike; concerning which matter a word may not be useless here. Exception has been taken by certain tender souls, of the all-for-love sort, against Goethe's conduct in that business. He flirted with his blooming blue-eyed Alsatian, she with him, innocently enough, thoughtlessly enough, till they both came to love each other; and then, when the marrying point began to grow visible in the distance, he stopt short and would no farther. Adieu, he cried, and waved his lily hand. 'The good Frederike was weeping;

I too was sick enough at heart.' Whereupon arises the question; Is Goethe a bad man; or is he not a bad man? Alas, worthy souls! if this world were all a wedding-dance, and *Thou-shalt* never came into collision with *Thou-wilt*, what a new improved time had we of it! But it is man's miserable lot, in the mean while, to eat and labour as well as wed; alas, how often, like Corporal Trim, does he spend the whole night, one moment dividing the world into two halves with his fair Beguine, next moment remembering that he has only a knapsack and fifteen florins to divide with any one! Besides, you do not consider that our dear Frederike, whom we too could weep for if it served, had a sound German heart within her stays; had furthermore abundance of *work* to do, and not even leisure to die of love; above all, that at this period, in the country parts of Alsatia, there were no circulating-library novels.

With regard to the false one's cruelty of temper, who, if we remember, saw a ghost in broad noon that day he rode away from her, let us, on the other hand, hear Jung Stilling, for he also had experience thereof at this very date. Poor Jung, a sort of German Dominie Sampson, awkward, honest, irascible, 'in old-fashioned clothes and bag-wig,' who had been several things, charcoal-burner, and, in repeated alternation, tailor and schoolmaster, was now come to Strasburg to study medicine; with purse long-necked, yet with head that had brains in it, and heart full of trust in God. A pious soul, who if he did afterwards write books on the Nature of Departed Spirits, also restored to sight (by his skill in eye-operations) above *two thousand poor blind persons*, without fee or reward, even supporting many of them in the hospital at his own expense.

'There dined,' says he, 'at this table about twenty people, whom the two comrades' (Troost and I) 'saw one after the other enter. One especially, with large bright eyes, magnificent brow, and fine stature, walked gallantly (*muthig*) in. He drew Herr Troost's and Stilling's eyes on him; Herr Troost said, "That must be a superior man." Stilling

assented, yet thought they would both have much vexation from him, as he looked like one of your wild fellows. This did Stilling infer from the frank style which the student had assumed; but here he was far mistaken. They found, meanwhile, that this distinguished individual was named Herr Goethe.

'Herr Troost whispered to Stilling, "Here it were best one sat seven days silent." Stilling felt this truth; they sat silent therefore, and no one particularly minded them, except that Goethe now and then hurled over (*herüberwälzte*) a look: he sat opposite Stilling, and had the government of the table without aiming at it.

'Herr Troost was neat, and dressed in the fashion; Stilling likewise tolerably so. He had a dark-brown coat with fustian under-garments: only that a scratch-wig also remained to him, which, among his bag-wigs, he would wear out. This he had put on one day, and came therewith to dinner. Nobody took notice of it except Herr Waldberg of Vienna. That gentleman looked at him; and as he had already heard that Stilling was greatly taken up about religion, he began, and asked him, Whether he thought Adam in Paradise had worn a scratch-wig? All laughed heartily, except Salzman, Goethe and Troost; these did not laugh. In Stilling wrath rose and burnt, and he answered: "Be ashamed of this jest; such a trivial thing is not worth laughing at!" But Goethe struck-in and added: "Try a man first whether he deserves mockery. It is devil-like to fall upon an honest-hearted person who has injured nobody, and make sport of him!" From that time Herr Goethe took up Stilling, visited him, liked him, made friendship and brothership with him, and strove by all opportunities to do him kindness. Pity that so few are acquainted with this noble man in respect of his heart!'[1]

Here, indeed, may be the place to mention, that this noble man, in respect of his heart, and goodness and badness, is not altogether easy to get acquainted with; that innumerable persons, of the man-milliner, parish-clerk and circulating-library sort, will find him a hard nut to crack. Hear in what questionable manner, so early as the year 1773, he expresses himself towards Herr Sulzer, whose beautiful hypothesis, that 'Nature meant, by the constant influx of satisfactions streaming-in upon us, to fashion our minds, on the whole, to softness and sensibility,' he will not leave a leg to stand on. '*On the whole*,' says he, 'she does no such thing; she rather,

[1] *Stillings Wanderschaft.* Berlin and Leipzig, 1778.

God be thanked, hardens her genuine children against the pains and evils she incessantly prepares for them; so that we name him the happiest man who is the strongest to make front against evil, to put it aside from him, and in defiance of it go the road of his own will.' 'Man's art in all situations is to fortify himself against Nature, to avoid her thousandfold ills, and only to enjoy his measure of the good; till at length he manages to include the whole circulation of his true and factitious wants in a palace, and fix as far as possible all scattered beauty and felicity within his glass walls, where accordingly he grows ever the weaker, takes to "joys of the soul," and his powers, roused to their natural exertion by no contradiction, melt away into'—*horresco referens*—'Virtue, Benevolence, Sensibility!' In Goethe's Writings too, we all know, the moral lesson is seldom so easily educed as one would wish. Alas, how seldom is he so direct in tendency as his own plain-spoken moralist at Plundersweilern:

> 'Dear Christian people, one and all,
> When will you cease your sinning?
> Else can your comfort be but small,
> Good hap scarce have beginning:
> For Vice is hurtful unto man,
> In Virtue lies his surest plan;'

or, to give it in the original words, the emphasis of which no foreign idiom can imitate:

> *'Die Tugend ist das höchste Gut,*
> *Das Laster Weh dem Menschen thut!'*

In which emphatic couplet, does there not, as the critics say in other cases, lie the essence of whole volumes, such as we have read?—

Goethe's far most important relation in Strasburg was the accidental temporary one with Herder; which issued, indeed, in a more permanent, though at no time an altogether intimate one. Herder, with much to give, had always something to require; living with him seems never to have been wholly

a sinecure. Goethe and he moreover were fundamentally different, not to say discordant; neither could the humour of the latter be peculiarly sweetened by his actual business in Strasburg, that of undergoing a surgical operation on 'the lachrymatory duct,' and, above all, an unsuccessful one:

'He was attending the Prince of Holstein-Eutin, who laboured under mental distresses, on a course of travel; and had arrived with him at Strasburg. Our society, so soon as his presence there was known, felt a strong wish to get near him; which happiness, quite unexpectedly and by chance, befel me first. I had gone to the Inn *zum Geist*, visiting I forget what stranger of rank. Just at the bottom of the stairs I came upon a man, like myself about to ascend, whom by his look I could take to be a clergyman. His powdered hair was fastened-up into a round lock, the black coat also distinguished him; still more a long black silk mantle, the end of which he had gathered together and stuck into his pocket. This in some measure surprising, yet on the whole gallant and pleasing figure, of whom I had already heard speak, left me no doubt but it was the famed Traveller; and my address soon convinced him that he was known to me. He asked my name, which could not be of any significance to him; however, my openness seemed to give pleasure, for he replied to it in friendly style, and as we stept upstairs, forthwith showed himself ready for a lively communication. Our visit also was to the same party; and before separating I begged permission to wait upon himself, which he kindly enough accorded me. I delayed not to make repeated use of this preferment; and was the longer the more attracted towards him. He had something softish in his manner, which was fit and dignified, without strictly being bred. A round face; a fine brow; a somewhat short blunt nose; a somewhat projected, yet highly characteristic, pleasant, amiable mouth. Under black eyebrows, a pair of coal-black eyes, which failed not of their effect, though one of them was wont to be red and inflamed.'

With this gifted man, by five years his senior, whose writings had already given him a name, and announced the much that lay in him, the open-hearted disciple could manifoldly communicate, learning and enduring. Erelong, under that 'softish manner,' there disclosed itself a 'counterpulse' of causticity, of ungentle almost noisy banter; the blunt nose was too often curled in an adunco-suspensive manner. Whatsoever of self-complacency, of acquired attachment and in-

sight, of self-sufficiency well or ill grounded, lay in the youth, was exposed, we can fancy, to the severest trial. In Herder too, as in an expressive microcosm, he might see imaged the whole wide world of German literature, of European Thought; its old workings and misworkings, its best recent tendencies and efforts; what its past and actual wasteness, perplexity, confusion worse confounded, was. In all which, moreover, the bantered, yet imperturbably inquiring brave young man had quite other than a theoretic interest, being himself minded to dwell there. It is easy to conceive that Herder's presence, stirring-up in that fashion so many new and old matters, would mightily aggravate the former 'fermentation'; and thereby, it is true, unintentionally or not, forward the same towards clearness.

In fact, with the hastiest glance over the then position of the world spiritual, we shall find that as Disorder is never wanting (and for the young spiritual hero, who is there only to destroy Disorder and make it Order, can least of all be wanting), so, at the present juncture, it specially abounded. Why dwell on this often-delineated Epoch? Over all Europe the reign of Earnestness had now wholly dwindled into that of Dilettantism. The voice of a certain modern 'closet-logic,' which called itself, and could not but call itself, Philosophy, had gone forth, saying, Let there be darkness, and there was darkness. No Divinity any longer dwelt in the world; and as men cannot do without a Divinity, a sort of terrestrial-upholstery one had been got together, and named Taste, with medallic virtuosi and picture cognoscenti, and enlightened letter and belles-lettres men enough for priests. To which worship, with its stunted formularies and hungry results, must the earnest mind, like the hollow and shallow one, adjust itself, as best might be. To a new man, no doubt, the Earth is always new, never wholly without interest. Knowledge, were it only that of dead languages, or of dead actions, the foreign tradition of what others had acquired and done, was still to be searched after; fame might

be enjoyed if procurable; above all, the culinary and brewing arts remained in pristine completeness, their results could be relished with pristine vigour. Life lumbered along, better or worse, in pitiful discontent, not yet in decisive desperation, as through a dim day of languor, sultry and sunless. Already, too, on the horizon might be seen clouds, might be heard murmurs, which by and by proved themselves of an electric character, and were to cool and clear that same sultriness in wondrous deluges.

To a man standing in the midst of German literature, and looking out thither for his highest good, the view was troubled perhaps with various peculiar perplexities. For two centuries, German literature had lain in the sere leaf. The Luther, 'whose words were half battles,' and such half battles as could shake and overset half Europe with their cannonading, had long since gone to sleep; and all other words were but the miserable bickering of theological camp-suttlers in quarrel over the stripping of the slain. Ulrich Hutten slept silent, in the little island of the Zurich Lake; the weary and heavy-laden had wiped the sweat from his brow, and laid him down to rest there . the valiant, fire-tempered heart, with all its woes and loves and loving indignations, mouldered, cold, forgotten; with such a pulse no new heart rose to beat. The tamer Opitzes and Flemmings of a succeeding era had, in like manner, long fallen obsolete. One unhappy generation after another of pedants, 'rhizophagous,' living on roots, Greek or Hebrew; of farce-writers, gallant-verse writers, journalists and other jugglers of nondescript sort, wandered in nomadic wise, whither provender was to be had; among whom, if a passionate Gunther go with some emphasis to ruin; if an illuminated Thomasius, earlier than the general herd, deny witchcraft, we are to esteem it a felicity. This too, however, has passed; and now, in manifold enigmatical signs, a new Time announces itself. Well-born Hagedorns, munificent Gleims have again rendered the character of Author honourable; the polish of correct, assiduous Rabeners and Ramlers

have smoothed away the old impurities; a pious Klopstock, to the general enthusiasm, rises anew into something of seraphic music, though by methods wherein he can have no follower; the brave spirit of a Lessing pierces, in many a life-giving ray, through the dark inertness: Germany has risen to a level with Europe, is henceforth participant of all European influences; nay, it is now appointed, though not yet ascertained, that Germany is to be the leader of spiritual Europe. A deep movement agitates the universal mind of Germany, though as yet no one sees towards what issue; only that heavings and eddyings, confused conflicting tendencies, work unquietly everywhere; the movement is begun and will not stop, but the course of it is yet far from ascertained. Even to the young man now looking-on with such anxious intensity had this very task been allotted: To find it a course, and set it flowing thereon.

Whoever will represent this confused revolutionary condition of all things, has but to fancy how it would act on the most susceptive and comprehensive of living minds; what a Chaos he had taken in, and was dimly struggling to body-forth into a Creation. Add to which, his so confused, contradictory personal condition; appointed by a positive father to be practitioner of Law, by a still more positive mother (old Nature herself) to be practitioner of Wisdom, and Captain of spiritual Europe: we have confusion enough for him, doubts economic and doubts theologic, doubts moral and æsthetical, a whole world of confusion and doubt.

Nevertheless to the young Strasburg student the gods had given their most precious gift, which is worth all others, without which all others are worth nothing; a seeing eye and a faithful loving heart:

'Er hatt' ein Auge treu und klug,
Und war auch liebevoll genug,
Zu schauen manches klar und rein,
Und wieder alles zu machen sein;

Hatt' auch eine Zunge die sich ergoss,
Und leicht und fein in Worte floss;
Dess thaten die Musen sich erfreun,
Wollten ihn zum Meistersänger weihn.'[1]

A mind of all-piercing vision, of sunny strength, not made to ray-out darker darkness, but to bring warm sunlight, all-purifying, all-uniting. A clear, invincible mind, and 'consecrated to be Master-singer' in quite another guild than that Nürnberg one.

His first literary productions fall in his twenty-third year; *Werter*, the most celebrated of these, in his twenty-fifth. Of which wonderful Book, and its now recognised character as poetic (and prophetic) utterance of the World's Despair, it is needless to repeat what has elsewhere been written. This and *Götz von Berlichingen*, which also, as a poetic looking-back into the past, was a word for the world, have produced incalculable effects;—which now indeed, however some departing echo of them may linger in the wrecks of our own Moss-trooper and Satanic Schools, do at length all happily lie behind us. Some trifling incidents at Wetzlar, and the suicide of an unhappy acquaintance, were the means of 'crystallising' that wondrous perilous stuff, which the young heart oppressively held dissolved in it, into this world-famous, and as it proved, world-medicative *Werter*. He had gone to Wetzlar with an eye still to Law; which now, however, was abandoned, never to be resumed. Thus did he too, 'like Saul the son of Kish, go out to seek his father's asses, and instead thereof find a kingdom.'

With the completion of these two Works (a completion in every sense, for they were not only emitted, but speedily also *de*mitted, and seen over, and left behind), commences what we can specially call his Life, his activity as Man. The outward particulars of it, from this point where his own

[1] *Hans Sachsens Poetische Sendung* (*Goethes Werke*, xiii.); a beautiful piece (a very *Hans Sachs beatified*, both in character and style), which we wish there was any possibility of translating.

Narrative ends, have been briefly summed-up in these terms:

'In 1776, the Heir-apparent of Weimar was passing through Frankfort, on which occasion, by the intervention of some friends, he waited upon Goethe. The visit must have been mutually agreeable; for a short time afterwards the young Author was invited to court; apparently to contribute his assistance in various literary institutions and arrangements then proceeding or contemplated; and in pursuance of this honourable call, he accordingly settled at Weimar, with the title of *Legationsrath*, and the actual dignity of a place in the *Collegium*, or Council. The connexion begun under such favourable auspices, and ever afterwards continued under the like or better, has been productive of important consequences, not only to Weimar but to all Germany. The noble purpose undertaken by the Duchess Amelia was zealously forwarded by the young Duke on his accession; under whose influence, supported and directed by his new Councillor, this inconsiderable state has gained for itself a fairer distinction than any of its larger, richer or more warlike neighbours. By degrees whatever was brightest in the genius of Germany had been gathered to this little court; a classical theatre was under the superintendence of Goethe and Schiller; here Wieland taught and sung; in the pulpit was Herder; and possessing such a four, the small town of Weimar, some five-and-twenty years ago, might challenge the proudest capital of the world to match it in intellectual wealth. Occupied so profitably to his country, and honourably to himself, Goethe continued rising in favour with his Prince; by degrees a political was added to his literary trust; in 1779 he became Privy Councillor; President in 1782; and at length after his return from Italy, where he had spent two years in varied studies and observation, he was appointed Minister; a post which he only a few years ago resigned, on his final retirement from public affairs.'

Notable enough that little Weimar should, in this particular, have brought back, as it were, an old Italian Commonwealth into the nineteenth century! For the Petrarcas and Boccaccios, though reverenced as Poets, were not supposed to have lost their wits as men; but could be employed in the highest services of the state, not only as fit, but as the fittest, to discharge these. Very different with us, where Diplomatists and Governors can be picked up from the highways, or chosen in the manner of blindman's buff (the first figure

you clutch, say rather that clutches *you*, will make a governor); and, even in extraordinary times, it is thought much if a Milton can become Latin Clerk under some Bulstrode Whitelock, and be called 'one Mr. Milton.' As if the poet, with his poetry, were no other than a pleasant mountebank, with faculty of a certain ground-and-lofty tumbling which would amuse; for which you must throw him a few coins, a little flattery, otherwise he would not amuse you with it. As if there were any talent whatsoever; above all, as if there were any talent of Poetry (by the consent of all ages the highest talent, and sometimes pricelessly high), the first foundation of which were not even these two things (properly but one thing): intellectual Perspicacity, with force and honesty of Will. Which two, do they not, in their simplest quite naked form, constitute the very equipment a Man of Business needs; the very implements whereby *all* business, from that of the delver and ditcher to that of the legislator and imperator, is accomplished; as in their noblest concentration they are still the moving faculty of the Artist and Prophet!

To Goethe himself this connexion with Weimar opened the happiest course of life which, probably, the age he lived in could have yielded him. Moderation, yet abundance; elegance without luxury or sumptuosity: Art enough to give a heavenly firmament to his existence; Business enough to give it a solid earth. In his multifarious duties he comes in contact with all manner of men; gains experience and tolerance of all men's ways. A faculty like his, which could master the highest spiritual problems and conquer Evil Spirits in their own domain, was not likely to be foiled by such when they put-on the simpler shape of material clay. The greatest of Poets is also the skilfulest of Managers: the little terrestrial Weimar trust committed to him prospers; and one sees with a sort of smile, in which may lie a deep seriousness, how the Jena Museums, University arrangements, Weimar Art-exhibitions and Palace-buildings, are guided smoothly on, by a hand

which could have worthily swayed imperial sceptres. The world, could it intrust its imperial sceptres to such hands, were blessed: nay, to this man, without the world's consent given or asked, a still higher function *had* been committed. But on the whole, we name his external life happy, among the happiest, in this, that a noble princely Courtesy could dwell in it, based on the worship, by speech and practice, of Truth only (for his victory, as we said above, was so complete, as almost to hide that there had been a struggle), and the worldly could praise him as the most agreeable of men, and the spiritual as the highest and clearest; but happy above all, in this, that it forwarded him, as no other could have done, in his inward life, the good or evil hap of which was alone of permanent importance.

The inward life of Goethe, onward from this epoch, lies nobly recorded in the long series of his Writings. Of these, meanwhile, the great bulk of our English world has nowise yet got to such understanding and mastery, that we could with much hope of profit, go into a critical examination of their merits and characteristics. Such a task can stand-over till the day for it arrive; be it in this generation, or the next, or after the next. What has been elsewhere already set forth suffices the present want, or needs only to be repeated and enforced; the expositor of German things must say, with judicious Zanga in the play: "First recover that, then shalt thou know more." A glance over the grand outlines of the matter, and more especially under the aspect suitable to these days, can alone be in place here.

In *Goethe's Works*, chronologically arranged, we see this above all things: A mind working itself into clearer and clearer freedom; gaining a more and more perfect dominion of its world. The pestilential fever of Scepticism runs through its stages; but happily it ends and disappears at the last stage, not in death, not in chronic malady (the commonest way), but in clearer, henceforth invulnerable health.

Werter we called the voice of the world's despair: passionate, uncontrollable is this voice; not yet melodious and supreme, —as nevertheless we at length hear it in the wild apocalyptic *Faust*: like a death-song of departing worlds; no voice of joyful 'morning stars singing together' over a Creation; but of red nigh-extinguished midnight stars, in spheral swan-melody, proclaiming, It is ended!

What follows, in the next period, we might, for want of a fitter term, call Pagan or Ethnic in character; meaning thereby an anthropomorphic character, akin to that of old Greece and Rome. *Wilhelm Meister* is of that stamp: warm, hearty, sunny human Endeavour; a free recognition of Life, in its depth, variety and majesty; as yet no Divinity recognised there. The famed *Venetian Epigrams* are of the like Old Ethnic tone: musical, joyfully strong; true, yet not the whole truth, and sometimes in their blunt realism jarring on the sense. As in this, oftener cited perhaps, by a certain class of wise men, than the due proportion demanded:

> Why so bustleth the People and crieth?—Would find itself victual,
> Children too would beget, feed on the best may be had!
> Mark in thy notebooks, Traveller, this, and at home go do likewise:
> Farther reacheth no man, make he what stretching he will.

Doubt, reduced into Denial, now lies prostrate under foot: the fire has done its work, an old world is in ashes; but the smoke and the flame are blown away, and a sun again shines clear over the ruin, to raise therefrom a new nobler verdure and flowerage. Till at length, in the third or final period, melodious Reverence becomes triumphant; a deep all-pervading Faith, with mild voice, grave as gay, speaks forth to us in a *Meisters Wanderjahre*, in a *West-Œstlicher Divan*; in many a little *Zahme Xenie*, and true-hearted little rhyme, 'which,' it has been said, 'for pregnancy and genial significance, except in the Hebrew Scriptures, you will nowhere match.' As here, striking-in almost at a venture:

Like as a Star,
That maketh not haste,
That taketh not rest,
Be each one fulfilling
His god-given Hest.[1]

Or this small Couplet, which the reader, if he wil, may substitute for whole horse-loads of *Essays on the Origin of Evil*; a spiritual manufacture which, in these enlightened times, ought ere now to have gone out of fashion:

"What shall I teach thee, the foremost thing?"
Couldst teach me off my own Shadow to spring!

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[1] *Wie das Gestirn,*
Ohne Hast,
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

So stands it in the original; hereby, however, hangs a tale:

'A fact,' says one of our fellow-labourers in this German vineyard, 'has but now come to our knowledge, which we take pleasure and pride in stating. Fifteen Englishmen, entertaining that high consideration for the good Goethe, which the labours and high deserts of a long life usefully employed so richly merit from all mankind, have presented him with a highly-wrought Seal, as a token of their veneration.' We must pass over the description of the gift, for it would be too elaborate; suffice it to say, that amid tasteful carving and emblematic embossing enough, stood these words engraved on a gold belt, on the four sides respectively: *To the German Master: From Friends in England: 28th August:* 1831; finally, that the impression was a star encircled with a serpent-of-eternity, and this motto: *Ohne Hast Aber Ohne Rast.*

'The following is the Letter which accompanied it:

'"*To the Poet Goethe, on the 28th of August* 1831

'"SIR,—Among the friends whom this so interesting Anniversary calls round you, may we 'English friends,' in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present ourselves to offer you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honour to accept this little Birthday Gift, which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value.

'"We said to ourselves: As it is always the highest duty and pleasure to show reverence to whom reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor is he who by act and word instructs us in wisdom,—so we, undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually taught towards their spiritual teacher, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common; for which

Or the pathetic picturesqueness of this:

A rampart-breach is every Day,
Which many mortals are storming:
Fall in the gap who may,
Of the slain no heap is forming.

Eine Bresche ist jeder Tag,
Die viele Menschen erstürmen;
Wer da auch fallen mag,
Die Todten sich niemals thürmen.

In such spirit, and with an eye that takes-in all provinces of human Thought, Feeling, and Activity, does the Poet stand forth as the true prophet of his time; victorious over its

end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching birthday; that so, while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting.

'"And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties!

'"We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious, that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to complete your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, like a star, without haste, yet without rest.

'"We remain, Sir, your friends and servants,

'"FIFTEEN ENGLISHMEN."

'The wonderful old man, to whom distant and unknown friends had paid such homage, could not but be moved at sentiments expressed in such terms. We hear that he values the token highly, and has condescended to return the following lines for answer:

"DEN FUNFZEHN ENGLISCHEN FREUNDEN

Worte, die der Dichter spricht,
Treu, in heimischen Bezirken
Wirken gleich, doch weiss er nicht
Ob sie in die Ferne wirken.

Britten! habt sie aufgefasst:
'Thätigen Sinn, das Thun gezügelt;
Stetig Streben ohne Hast;'
Und so wollt Ihrs denn besiegelt!

"Weimar, d. 28ten August 1831. GOETHE."'

(*Fraser's Magazine*, xxii. 447.)

And thus, as it chanced, was the poet's *last* birthday celebrated by an outward ceremony of a peculiar kind; wherein too, it is to be hoped, might lie some inward meaning and sincerity.

contradiction, possessor of its wealth; embodying the nobleness of the past into a new whole, into a new vital nobleness for the present and the future. Antique nobleness in all kinds, yet worn with new clearness; the spirit of it is preserved and again revealed in shape, when the former shape and vesture had become old (as vestures do), and was dead and cast forth; and we mourned as if the spirit too were gone. This, we are aware, is a high saying; applicable to no other man living, or that has lived for some two centuries; ranks Goethe, not only as the highest man of his time, but as a man of universal Time, important for all generations,—one of the landmarks in the History of Men.

Thus, from our point of view, does Goethe rise on us as the Uniter, and victorious Reconciler, of the distracted, clashing elements of the most distracted and divided age that the world has witnessed since the Introduction of the Christian Religion, to which old chaotic Era, of world-confusion and world-*re*fusion, of blackest darkness, succeeded by a dawn of light and nobler 'dayspring from on high,' this wondrous Era of ours is, indeed, oftenest likened. To the faithful heart let no era be a desperate one! It is ever the nature of Darkness to be followed by a new nobler Light; nay, to produce such. The woes and contradictions of an Atheistic time; of a world sunk in wickedness and baseness and unbelief, wherein also physical wretchedness, the disorganisation and broken-heartedness of whole classes struggling in ignorance and pain will not fail: all this, the view of all this, falls like a Sphinx-question on every new-born earnest heart, a life-and-death entanglement for every earnest heart to deliver itself from, and the world from. Of Wisdom cometh Strength: only when there is 'no vision' do the people perish. But, by natural vicissitude, the age of *Persiflage* goes out, and that of earnest unconquerable Endeavour must come in: for the ashes of the old fire will not warm men anew; the new generation is too desolate to indulge in mockery,—unless, perhaps, in bitter suicidal mockery of itself! Thus after Voltaires enough have

laughed and sniffed at what is false, appear some Turgots to ask what is true. Woe to the land where, in these seasons, no prophet arises; but only censors, satirists and embittered desperadoes, to make the evil worse; at best but to accelerate a consummation, which in accelerating they have aggravated! Old Europe had its Tacitus and Juvenal; but these availed not. New Europe too has had its Mirabeaus, and Byrons, and Napoleons, and innumerable red-flaming meteors, shaking pestilence from their hair; and earthquakes and deluges, and Chaos come again; but the clear Star, day's harbinger (*Phosphoros*, the bringer of *light*), had not yet been recognised.

That in Goethe there lay Force to educe reconcilement out of such contradiction as man is now born into, marks him as the Strong One of his time; the true *Earl*, though now with quite other weapons than those old steel *Jarls* were used to! Such reconcilement of contradictions, indeed, is the task of every man: the weakest reconciles somewhat; reduces old chaotic elements into new higher order; ever, according to faculty and endeavour, brings good out of evil. Consider now what faculty and endeavour must belong to the highest of such tasks, which virtually includes all others whatsoever! The thing that was given this man to reconcile (to begin reconciling and teach us how to reconcile), was the inward spiritual chaos; the centre of all other confusions, outward and inward: he was to close the Abyss out of which such manifold destruction, moral, intellectual, social, was proceeding.

The greatness of his Endowment, manifested in such a work, has long been plain to all men. That it belongs to the highest class of human endowments, entitling the wearer thereof, who so nobly used it, to the appellation, in its strictest sense, of Great Man,—is also becoming plain. A giant strength of Character is to be traced here; mild and kindly and calm, even as strength ever is. In the midst of so much spasmodic Byronism, bellowing till its windpipe is

cracked, how very different looks *this* symptom of strength: 'He appeared to aim at pushing away from him everything that did not hang upon his individual will.' 'In his own imperturbable firmness of character, he had grown into the habit of never contradicting any one. On the contrary, he listened with a friendly air to every one's opinion, and would himself elucidate and strengthen it by instances and reasons of his own. All who did not know him fancied that he thought as they did; for he was possessed of a preponderating intellect, and could transport himself into the mental state of any man, and imitate his manner of conceiving.'[1] Beloved brethren, who wish to be strong! Had not the man, who could take this smooth method of it, more strength in him than any teeth-grinding, glass-eyed 'lone Caloyer' you have yet fallen-in with? Consider your ways; consider, first, whether you cannot do with being *weak*! If the answer still prove negative, consider, secondly, what strength actually is, and where you are to try for it. A certain strong man, of former time, fought stoutly at Lepanto; worked stoutly as Algerine slave; stoutly delivered himself from such working; with stout cheerfulness endured famine and nakedness and the world's ingratitude; and, sitting in jail, with the one arm left him, wrote our joyfulest, and all but our deepest, modern book, and named it *Don Quixote*: this was a genuine strong man. A strong man, of recent time, fights little for any good cause anywhere; works weakly as an English lord; weakly delivers himself from such working; with weak despondency endures the cackling of plucked geese at St. James's; and, sitting in sunny Italy, in his coach-and-four, at a distance or two thousand miles from them, writes, over many reams of paper, the following sentence, with variations: *Saw ever the world one greater or unhappier?* This was a sham strong man. Choose ye.—

Of Goethe's spiritual Endowment, looked at on the Intellectual side, we have (as indeed lies in the nature of things,

[1] *Wilhelm Meister*, book vi.

for moral and intellectual are fundamentally one and the same) to pronounce a similar opinion; that it is great among the very greatest. As the first gift of all, may be discerned here utmost Clearness, all-piercing faculty of Vision; whereto, as we ever find it, all other gifts are superadded; nay, properly they are but other forms of the same gift. A nobler power of insight than this of Goethe you in vain look for, since Shakspeare passed away. In fact, there is much every way, here in particular, that these two minds have in common. Shakspeare too does not look *at* a thing, but into it, through it; so that he constructively comprehends it, can take it asunder, and put it together again; the thing melts, as it were, into light under his eye, and anew *creates* itself before him. That is to say, he is a Thinker in the highest of all senses: he is a Poet. For Goethe, as for Shakspeare, the world lies all translucent, all *fusible* we might call it, encircled with WONDER; the Natural in reality the Supernatural, for to the seer's eyes both become one. What are the *Hamlets* and *Tempests*, the *Fausts* and *Mignons*, but glimpses accorded us into this translucent, wonder-encircled world; revelations of the mystery of all mysteries, Man's Life as it actually is?

Under other secondary aspects the poetical faculty of the two will still be found cognate. Goethe is full of *figurativeness*; this grand light-giving Intellect, as all such are, is an imaginative one,—and in a quite other sense than most of our unhappy Imaginatives will imagine. Gall the Craniologist declared him to be a born *Volksredner* (popular orator), both by the figure of his brow, and what was still more decisive, because 'he could not speak but a figure came.' Gall saw what was high as his own nose reached,

> High as the nose doth reach, all clear!
> What higher lies, they ask: Is it here?

A far different figurativeness was this of Goethe than popular oratory has work for. In figures of the popular-

oratory kind, Goethe, throughout his Writings at least, is nowise the most copious man known to us, though on a stricter scrutiny we may find him the richest. Of your ready-made, coloured-paper metaphors, such as can be sewed or plastered on the surface, by way of giving an ornamental finish to the rag-web already woven, we speak not; there is not one such to be discovered in all his Works. But even in the use of genuine metaphors, which are not haberdashery ornament, but the genuine new vesture of new thoughts, he yields to lower men (for example to Jean Paul); that is to say, in fact, he is more master of the *common* language, and can oftener make *it* serve him. Goethe's figurativeness lies in the very centre of his being; manifests itself as the constructing of the inward elements of a thought, as the *vital* embodiment of it: such figures as those of Goethe you will look for through all modern literature, and except here and there in Shakspeare, nowhere find a trace of. Again, it is the same faculty in higher exercise, that enables the poet to construct a Character. Here too Shakspeare and Goethe, unlike innumerable others, are *vital*; their construction begins at the *heart* and flows outward as the life-streams do; fashioning the *surface*, as it were, spontaneously. Those Macbeths and Falstaffs, accordingly, these Fausts and Philinas have a verisimilitude and life that separates them from all other fictions of late ages. All others, in comparison, have more or less the nature of hollow vizards, constructed from without inwards, painted *like*, and deceptively put in motion. Many years ago on finishing our first perusal of *Wilhelm Meister*, with a very mixed sentiment in other respects, we could not but feel that here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of these, than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation.

Neither, as an additional similarity (for the great is ever like itself), let the majestic Calmness of both be omitted; their perfect tolerance for all men and all things. This too

proceeds from the same source, perfect clearness of vision: he who comprehends an object cannot hate it, has already begun to love it. In respect of style, no less than of character, this calmness and graceful smooth-flowing softness is again characteristic of both; though in Goethe the quality is more complete, having been matured by far more assiduous study. Goethe's style is perhaps to be reckoned the most excellent that our modern world, in any language, can exhibit. 'Even to a foreigner,' says one, 'it is full of character and secondary meanings; polished, yet vernacular and cordial, it sounds like the dialect of wise, antique-minded, true-hearted men: in poetry, brief, sharp, simple and expressive: in prose, perhaps still more pleasing; for it is at once concise and full, rich, clear, unpretending and melodious; and the sense, not presented in alternating flashes, piece after piece revealed and withdrawn, rises before us as in continuous dawning, and stands at last simultaneously complete, and bathed in the mellowest and ruddiest sunshine. It brings to mind what the prose of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, would have been, had they written under the good without the bad influences of that French precision, which has polished and attenuated, trimmed and impoverished all modern languages; made our meaning clear, and too often shallow as well as clear.'

Finally, as Shakspeare is to be considered as the greater nature of the two, so on the other hand we must admit him to have been the less cultivated, and much the more careless. What Shakspeare *could* have done we nowhere discover. A careless mortal, open to the Universe and its influences, not caring strenuously to open himself; who, Prometheus-like, will scale Heaven (if it so must be), and is satisfied if he therewith pay the rent of his London Playhouse; who, had the Warwickshire Justice let him hunt deer unmolested, might, for many years more, have lived quiet on the green earth without such aërial journeys: an unparalleled mortal. In the great Goethe, again, we see a man through life at his utmost

strain; a man who, as he says himself, 'struggled toughly'; laid hold of all things, under all aspects, scientific or poetic: engaged passionately with the deepest interests of man's existence, in the most complex age of man's history. What Shakspeare's thoughts on 'God, Nature, Art,' would have been, especially had he lived to number fourscore years, were curious to know: Goethe's, delivered in many-toned melody, as the apocalypse of our era, are here for us to know.

Such was the noble talent intrusted to this man; such the noble employment he made thereof. We can call him, once more, 'a clear and universal man'; we can say that, in his universality, as thinker, as singer, as worker, he lived a life of antique nobleness under these new conditions; and, in so living, is alone in all Europe; the foremost, whom others are to learn from and follow. In which great act, or rather great sum-total of many acts, who shall compute what treasure of new strengthening, of faith become hope and vision, lies secured for all! The question, Can man still live in devoutness, yet without blindness or contraction; in unconquerable steadfastness for the right, yet without tumultuous exasperation against the wrong; as an antique worthy, yet with the expansion and increased endowment of a modern? is no longer a question, but has become a certainty, and ocularly-visible fact.

We have looked at Goethe, as we engaged to do, 'on *this* side,' and with the eyes of 'this generation'; that is to say, chiefly as a world-changer, and benignant spiritual revolutionist: for in our present so astonishing condition of 'progress of the species,' such is the category under which we must try all things, wisdom itself. And, indeed, under this aspect too, Goethe's Life and Works are doubtless of incalculable value, and worthy our most earnest study: for his Spiritual History is, as it were, the ideal emblem of all true men's in these days; the goal of Manhood, which he attained, we too in our degree have to aim at; let us mark well the

road he fashioned for himself, and in the dim weltering chaos rejoice to find a paved way.

Here, moreover, another word of explanation is perhaps worth adding. We mean, in regard to the controversy agitated (as about many things pertaining to Goethe) about his Political creed and practice, Whether he was Ministerial or in Opposition? Let the political admirer of Goethe be at ease: Goethe was both, and also neither! The 'rotten whitewashed (*gebrechliche übertünchte*) condition of society' was plainer to few eyes than to his, sadder to few hearts than to his. Listen to the Epigrammatist at Venice:

> To this stithy I liken the land, the hammer its ruler,
> And the people that plate, beaten between them that writhes:
> Woe to the plate, when nothing but wilful bruises on bruises
> Hit it at random; and made, cometh no Kettle to view!

But, alas, what is to be done?

> No Apostle-of-Liberty much to my heart ever found I;
> License, each for himself, this was at bottom their want.
> Liberator of many! first dare to be Servant of many:
> What a business is that, wouldst thou know it, go try!

Let the following also be recommended to all inordinate worshippers of Septennials, Triennials, Elective Franchise, and the Shameful Parts of the Constitution; and let each be a little tolerant of his neighbour's 'festoon,' and rejoice that he has himself found out *Freedom*,—a thing much wanted:

> Walls I can see tumbled down, walls I see also a-building;
> Here sit prisoners, there likewise do prisoners sit:
> Is the world, then, itself a huge prison? Free only the madman,
> His chains knitting still up into some graceful festoon?

So that, for the Poet, what remains but to leave Conservative and Destructive pulling one another's locks and ears off, as they will and can (the ulterior issue being long since indubitable enough); and, for his own part, strive day and night to forward the small suffering remnant of *Productives*; of those who, in true manful endeavour, were it under

despotism or under sansculottism, create somewhat, with whom alone, in the end, does the hope of the world lie? Go thou and do likewise! Art thou *called* to politics, work therein, as this man would have done, like a real and not an imaginary workman. Understand well, meanwhile, that to no man is his political constitution 'a life, but only a house wherein his life is led'; and hast thou a nobler task than such *house*-pargeting and smoke-doctoring, and pulling down of ancient rotten rat-inhabited walls, leave such to the proper craftsman; honour the higher Artist, and good-humouredly say with him:

> All this is neither my coat nor my cake,
> Why fill my hand with other men's charges?
> The fishes swim at ease in the lake,
> And take no thought of the barges.

Goethe's political practice, or rather no-practice, except that of self-defence, is a part of his conduct quite inseparably coherent with the rest; a thing we could recommend to universal study, that the spirit of it might be understood by all men, and by all men imitated.

Nevertheless it is nowise alone on this revolutionary or 'progress-of-the-species' side that Goethe has significance; his Life and Work is no painted show but a solid reality, and may be looked at with profit on all sides, from all imaginable points of view. Perennial, as a possession for ever, Goethe's History and Writings abide there; a thousand-voiced 'Melody of Wisdom,' which he that has ears may hear. What the experience of the most complexly-situated, deep-searching, everyway *far-experienced* man has yielded him of insight, lies written for all men here. He who was of compass to know and feel more than any other man, this is the record of his knowledge and feeling. 'The deepest heart, the highest head to scan,' was not beyond his faculty; thus, then, did he scan and interpret: let many generations listen, according to their want; let the generation which has no need of listening, and nothing new to learn there, esteem itself a happy one.

To us, meanwhile, to all that wander in darkness and seek light, as the one thing needful, be this possession reckoned among our choicest blessings and distinctions. *Colite talem virum;* learn of him, imitate, emulate him! So did *he* catch the Music of the Universe, and unfold it into clearness, and in authentic celestial tones bring it home to the hearts of men, from amid that soul-confusing Babylonish hubbub of this our new Tower-of-Babel era. For now too, as in that old time, had men said to themselves: Come, let us build a tower which shall reach to heaven; and by our steam-engines, and logic-engines, and skilful mechanism and manipulation, vanquish not only Physical Nature, but the divine Spirit of Nature, and scale the empyrean itself. Wherefore they must needs again be stricken with confusion of tongues (or of printing-presses); and *dispersed*,—to other work; wherein also, let us hope, their hammers and trowels shall better avail them.—

Of Goethe, with a feeling such as can be due to no other man, we now take farewell. *Vixit, vivit.*

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

No. 1

THE TALE[1]

BY GOETHE

[1832]

THAT Goethe, many years ago, wrote a piece named *Das Mährchen* (The Tale); which the admiring critics of Germany contrived to criticise by a stroke of the pen; declaring that it was indeed *The* Tale, and worthy to be called the Tale of Tales (*das Mährchen aller Mährchen*),—may appear certain to most English readers, for they have repeatedly seen as much in print. To some English readers it may appear certain, furthermore, that they personally know this Tale of Tales; and can even pronounce it to deserve no such epithet, and the admiring critics of Germany to be little other than blockheads.

English readers! the first certainty is altogether indubitable; the second certainty is not worth a rush.

That same *Mährchen aller Mährchen* you may see with your own eyes, at this hour, in the Fifteenth Volume of *Goethes Werke*; and seeing is believing. On the other hand, that English 'Tale of Tales,' put forth some years ago as the Translation thereof, by an individual connected with the Periodical Press of London (his Periodical vehicle, if we remember, broke down soon after, and was rebuilt, and still runs, under the name of *Court Journal*),—was a Translation, miserable enough, of a quite different thing; a thing, not a *Mährchen* (Fabulous Tale) at all, but an *Erzählung* or common fictitious Narrative; having no manner of relation to the real piece (beyond standing in the same Volume); not so much as Milton's *Tetrachordon* of Divorce has to his *Allegro* and *Penseroso*! In this way do individuals connected with the Periodical Press of London play their part, and commodiously befool thee, O Public of English readers, and can serve thee with a mass of roasted grass, and name it stewed venison; and will continue to do so, till thou—open thy eyes, and from a blind monster become a seeing one.

This mistake we did not publicly note at the time of its occurrence;

[1] FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 33.

for two good reasons: first, that while mistakes are increasing, like Population, at the rate of Twelve Hundred a-day, the benefit of seizing *one*, and throttling it, would be perfectly inconsiderable: second, that we were not then in existence. The highly composite astonishing Entity, which here as 'O. Y.' addresses mankind for a season, still slumbered (his elements scattered over Infinitude, and working under other shapes) in the womb of Nothing! Meditate on us a little, O reader: if thou wilt consider who and what we are; what Powers, of Cash, Esurience, Intelligence, Stupidity and Mystery created us, and what work we do and will do, there shall be no end to thy amazement.

This mistake, however, we do now note; induced thereto by occasion. By the fact, namely, that a genuine English Translation of that *Mährchen* has been handed-in to us for judgment; and now (such judgment having proved merciful) comes out from us in the way of publication. Of the Translation we cannot say much; by the colour of the paper, it may be some seven years old, and have lain perhaps in smoky repositories: it is not a good Translation; yet also not wholly bad; faithful to the original (as we can vouch, after strict trial); conveys the real meaning, though with an effort: here and there our pen has striven to help it, but could not do much. The poor Translator, who signs himself 'D. T.,' and affects to carry matters with a high hand, though, as we have ground to surmise, he is probably in straits for the necessaries of life,—has, at a more recent date, appended numerous Notes; wherein he will convince himself that more meaning lies in his *Mährchen* 'than in all the Literature of our century': some of these we have retained, now and then with an explanatory or exculpatory word of our own; the most we have cut away, as superfluous and even absurd. Superfluous and even absurd, we say: D. T. can take this of us as he likes; we know him, and what is in him, and what is not in him; believe that he will prove reasonable; can do either way. At all events, let one of the notablest Performances produced for the last thousand years be now, through his organs (since no other, in this elapsed half-century, have offered themselves), set before an undiscerning public.

We too will premise our conviction that this *Mährchen* presents a phantasmagoric Adumbration, pregnant with deepest significance; though nowise that D. T. has so accurately evolved the same. Listen notwithstanding to a remark or two, extracted from his immeasurable Proem:

'Dull men of this country,' says he, 'who pretend to admire Goethe, smiled on me when I first asked the meaning of this Tale. "Meaning!" answered they: "it is a wild arabesque, without meaning or purpose at all, except to dash together, copiously enough, confused hues of Imagination, and see what will come of them." Such is still the persuasion of

several heads; which nevertheless would perhaps grudge to be considered wigblocks.'—Not impossible: the first Sin in our Universe was Lucifer's, that of Self-conceit. But hear again; what is more to the point:

'The difficulties of interpretation are exceedingly enhanced by one circumstance, not unusual in other such writings of Goethe's; namely, that this is no Allegory; which, as in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, you have only once for all to find the key of, and so go on unlocking: it is a Phantasmagory, rather; wherein things the most heterogeneous are, with homogeneity of figure, emblemed forth; which would require not one key to unlock it, but, at different stages of the business, a dozen successive keys. Here you have Epochs of Time shadowed forth, there Qualities of the Human Soul; now it is Institutions, Historical Events, now Doctrines, Philosophic Truths: thus are all manner of "entities and quiddities and ghosts of defunct bodies" set flying; you have the whole Four Elements chaotico-creatively jumbled together, and spirits enough embodying themselves, and roguishly peering through, in the confused wild-working mass! * * *

'So much, however, I will stake my whole money-capital and literary character upon: that here is a wonderful EMBLEM OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY set forth; more especially a wonderful Emblem of this our wonderful and woful "Age of Transition"; what men have been and done, what they are to be and do, is, in this Tale of Tales, poetico-prophetically typified, in such a style of grandeur and celestial brilliancy and life, as the Western Imagination has not elsewhere reached; as only the Oriental Imagination, and in the primeval ages, was wont to attempt.'—Here surely is good wine, with a big bush! Study the Tale of Tales, O reader: even in the bald version of D. T., there will be meaning found. He continues in this triumphant style:

'Can any mortal head (not a wigblock) doubt that the Giant of this Poem means SUPERSTITION? That the Ferryman has something to do with the PRIESTHOOD; his Hut with the CHURCH?

'Again, might it not be presumed that the River were TIME; and that it flowed (as Time does) between two worlds? Call the world, or country on this side, where the fair Lily dwells, the world of SUPERNATURALISM; the country on that side, NATURALISM, the working week-day world where we all dwell and toil: whosoever or whatsoever introduces itself, and appears, in the firm-earth of human business, or as we well say, *comes into* Existence, must proceed *from* Lily's supernatural country; whatsoever of a material sort deceases and disappears might be expected to go *thither*. Let the reader consider this, and note what comes of it.

'To get a free solid communication established over this same wondrous River of Time, so that the Natural and Supernatural may stand in

friendliest neighbourhood and union, forms the grand action of this Phantasmagoric Poem: is not such also, let me ask thee, the grand action and summary of Universal History; the one problem of Human Culture; the thing which Mankind (once the three daily meals of victual were moderately secured) has ever striven after, and must ever strive after?—Alas! we observe very soon, matters stand on a most distressful footing, in this of Natural and Supernatural: there are three conveyances across, and all bad, all incidental, temporary, uncertain: the worst of the three, one would think, and the worst conceivable, were the Giant's Shadow, at sunrise and sunset; the best that Snake-bridge at noon, yet still only a bad-best. Consider again our trustless, rotten, revolutionary "age of transition," and see whether this too does not fit it!

'If you ask next, Who these other strange characters are, the Snake, the Will-o'-wisps, the Man with the Lamp? I will answer, in general and afar off, that *Light* must signify human Insight, Cultivation, in one sort or other. As for the Snake, I know not well what name to call it by; nay, perhaps, in our scanty vocabularies, there is no *name* for it, though that does not hinder its being a thing, genuine enough. Meditation; Intellectual Research; Understanding; in the most general acceptation, Thought: all these come near designating it; none actually designates it. Were I bound, under legal penalties, to give the creature a name, I should say, THOUGHT rather than another.

'But what if our Snake, and so much else that works here beside it, were neither a *quality*, nor a *reality*, nor a *state*, nor an *action*, in any kind; none of these things purely and alone, but something intermediate and partaking of them all! In which case, to *name* it, in vulgar speech, were a still more frantic attempt: it is unnameable in speech; and remains only the allegorical Figure known in this Tale by the name of Snake, and more or less *resembling* and shadowing-forth somewhat that speech has named, or might name. It is this heterogeneity of nature, pitching your solidest Predicables heels-over-head, throwing you half-a-dozen Categories into the melting-pot at once,—that so unspeakably bewilders a Commentator, and for moments is nigh reducing him to *delirium saltans*.

'The Will-o'-wisps, that laugh and jig, and compliment the ladies, and eat gold and shake it from them, I for my own share take the liberty of viewing as some shadow of ELEGANT CULTURE, or modern Fine Literature; which by and by became so sceptical-destructive; and did, as French Philosophy, eat Gold (or Wisdom) enough, and shake it out again. In which sense, their coming (into Existence) by the old Ferryman's (by the Priesthood's) assistance, and almost oversetting his boat, and then laughing at him, and trying to skip-off from him, yet being

obliged to stop till they had satisfied him: all this, to the discerning eye, has its significance.

'As to the Man with the Lamp, in him and his gold-*giving*, jewel-forming and otherwise so miraculous Light, which "casts no shadow," and "cannot illuminate what is wholly otherwise in darkness,"—I see what you might name the celestial REASON of Man (Reason as contrasted with Understanding, and superordinated to it), the purest essence of his seeing Faculty; which manifests itself as the Spirit of Poetry, of Prophecy, or whatever else of highest in the intellectual sort man's mind can do. We behold this respectable, venerable Lamp-bearer everywhere present in time of need; directing, accomplishing, working, wonder-working, finally victorious;—as, in strict reality, it is ever (if we will study it) the Poetic Vision that lies at the bottom of all other Knowledge or Action; and is the source and creative fountain of whatsoever mortals *ken* or *can*, and mystically and miraculously guides them forward whither they are to go. Be the Man with the Lamp, then, named REASON; mankind's noblest inspired Insight and Light; whereof all the other lights are but effluences, and more or less discoloured emanations.

'His Wife, poor old woman, we shall call PRACTICAL ENDEAVOUR; which as married to Reason, to spiritual Vision and Belief, first makes-up man's being here below. Unhappily the ancient couple, we find, are but in a decayed condition: the better emblems are they of Reason and Endeavour in this our "transitionary age"! The Man presents himself in the garb of a peasant, the Woman has grown over-garrulous, querulous; both live nevertheless in their "ancient cottage," better or worse, the roof-tree of which still holds together over them. And then those mischievous Will-o'-wisps, who pay the old lady such court, and eat all the old gold (all that was wise and beautiful and desirable) off her walls; and show the old stones, quite ugly and bare, as they had not been for ages! Besides they have killed poor Mops, the plaything, and joy and fondling of the house;—as has not that same Elegant Culture, or French Philosophy done, wheresoever it has arrived? Mark, notwithstanding, how the Man with the Lamp puts it all right again, reconciles everything, and makes the finest business out of what seemed the worst.

'With regard to the Four Kings, and the Temple which lies fashioned underground, please to consider all this as the Future lying prepared and certain under the Present: you observe, not only inspired Reason (or the Man with the Lamp), but scientific Thought (or the Snake), can discern it lying there: nevertheless much work must be done, innumerable difficulties fronted and conquered, before it can rise out of the depths (of the Future), and realise itself as the actual worshipping-place of man, and "the most frequented Temple in the whole Earth."

'As for the fair Lily and her ambulatory necessitous Prince, these

are objects that I shall admit myself incapable of naming: yet nowise admit myself incapable of attaching meaning to. Consider them as the two disjointed Halves of the singular Dualistic Being of ours; a Being, I must say, the most utterly Dualistic; fashioned, from the very heart of it, out of Positive and Negative (what we happily call Light and Darkness, Necessity and Freewill, Good and Evil, and the like); everywhere out of *two* mortally opposed things, which yet must be united in vital love, if there is to be any *Life*;—a Being, I repeat, Dualistic beyond expressing; which will split in two, strike it in *any* direction, on *any* of its six sides; and does of itself split in two (into Contradiction), every hour of the day,—were not *Life* perpetually there, perpetually knitting it together again! But as to that cutting-up, and parcelling, and labelling of the indivisible Human Soul into what are called "Faculties," it is a thing I have from of old eschewed, and even hated. A thing which you *must* sometimes do (or you cannot *speak*); yet which is never done without Error hovering near you; for most part, without her pouncing on you, and quite blindfolding you.

'Let not us, therefore, in looking at Lily and her Prince be tempted to that practice: why should we try to *name* them at all? Enough, if we do feel that man's whole Being is riven asunder every way (in this "transitionary age"), and yawning in hostile, irreconcilable contradiction with itself: what good were it to know farther in what *direction* the rift (as our Poet here pleased to represent it) had taken effect? Fancy, however, that these two Halves of Man's Soul and Being are separated, in pain and enchanted obstruction, from one another. The better, fairer Half sits in the Supernatural country, deadening and killing; alas, not permitted to come across into the Natural visible country, and there make all blessed and alive! The rugged stronger Half, in such separation, is quite lamed and paralytic; wretched, forlorn, in a state of death-life, must he wander to and fro over the River of Time; all that is dear and essential to him, imprisoned there; which if he look at, he grows still weaker, which if he touch, he dies. Poor Prince! And let the judicious reader, who has read the Era he lives in, or even spelt the alphabet thereof, say whether, with the paralytic-lamed Activity of man (hampered and hamstrung in a "transitionary age" of Scepticism, Methodism; atheistic Sarcasm, hysteric Orgasm; brazen-faced Delusion, Puffery, Hypocrisy, Stupidity, and the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill), it is not even so? Must not poor man's Activity (like this poor Prince) wander from Natural to Supernatural, and back again, disconsolate enough; unable to *do* anything, except merely wring its hands, and, whimpering and blubbering, lamentably inquire: *What* shall I do?

'But Courage! Courage! The Temple is built (though under-

ground); the Bridge shall arch itself, the divided Two shall clasp each other as flames do, rushing into one; and all that ends well shall be well! Mark only how, in this inimitable Poem, worthy of an Olympic crown, or prize of the Literary Society, it is represented as proceeding!'

So far D. T.; a commentator who at least does not want confidence in himself: whom we shall only caution not to be too confident; to remember always that, as he once says, 'Phantasmagory is not Allegory'; that much exists, under our very noses, which has no 'name,' and can get none; that the 'River of Time' and so forth may be one thing, or more than one, or none; that, in short, there is risk of the too valiant D. T.'s bamboozling himself in this matter; being led from puddle to pool; and so left standing at last, like a foolish mystified nose-of-wax, wondering where the devil he is.

To the simpler sort of readers we shall also extend an advice; or be it rather, proffer a petition. It is to fancy themselves, for the time being, delivered altogether from D. T.'s company; and to read this *Mährchen*, as if it were there only for its own sake, and those tag-rag Notes of his were so much blank paper. Let the simpler sort of readers say now how they like it! If unhappily, on looking back, some spasm of 'the malady of thought' begin afflicting them, let such Notes be then inquired of, but not till then, and then also with distrust. Pin thy faith to no man's sleeve; hast thou not two eyes of thy own?

The Commentator himself cannot, it is to be hoped, imagine that he has exhausted the matter. To decipher and represent the *genesis* of this extraordinary Production, and what was the Author's state of mind in producing it; to *see*, with dim common eyes, what the great Goethe, with inspired poetic eyes, then saw; and paint to oneself the thick-coming shapes and many-coloured splendours of his 'Prospero's Grotto,' at that hour: this were what we could call complete criticism and commentary; what D. T. is far from having done, and ought to fall on his face, and confess that he can never do.

We shall conclude with remarking two things. First, that D. T. does not appear to have set eye on any of those German Commentaries on this Tale of Tales; or even to have heard, credently, that such exist: an omission, in a professed Translator, which he himself may answer for. Secondly, that with all his boundless preluding, he has forgotten to insert the Author's own prelude; the passage, namely, by which this *Mährchen* is specially ushered in, and the key-note of it struck by the Composer himself, and the tone of the whole prescribed! This latter altogether glaring omission we now charitably supply; and then let D. T., and his illustrious Original, and the Readers of this Magazine take it among them. Turn to the latter part of the *Deutschen Ausge-*

wanderten (page 208, Volume xv. of the last Edition of *Goethes Werke*); it is written there, as we render it:

'"The Imagination," said Karl, "is a fine faculty; yet I like not when she works on what has actually happened: the airy forms she creates are welcome as things of their own kind; but uniting with Truth she produces oftenest nothing but monsters; and seems to me, in such cases, to fly into direct variance with Reason and Common Sense. She ought, you might say, to hang upon no object, to force no object on us; she must, if she is to produce Works of Art, play like a sort of music upon us; move us within ourselves, and this in such a way that we forget there is anything without us producing the movement."

'"Proceed no farther," said the old man, "with your conditionings! To enjoy a product of Imagination, this also is a condition, that we enjoy it unconditionally; for Imagination herself cannot condition and bargain; she must wait what shall be given her. She forms no plans, prescribes for herself no path; but is borne and guided by her own pinions; and hovering hither and thither, marks out the strangest courses; which in their direction are ever altering. Let me but, on my evening walk, call up again to life within me, some wondrous figures I was wont to play with in earlier years. This night I promise you a Tale, which shall remind you of Nothing and of All."'

And now for it. O. Y.

THE TALE ('DAS MAHRCHEN'), BY GOETHE

In his little Hut, by the great River, which a heavy rain had swoln to overflowing, lay the ancient Ferryman, asleep, wearied by the toil of the day. In the middle of the night,[1] loud voices awoke him; he heard that it was travellers wishing to be carried over.

Stepping out, he saw two large Will-o'-wisps, hovering to and fro on his boat, which lay moored: they said, they were in violent haste, and should have been already on the other side. The old Ferryman made no loitering; pushed off, and steered with his usual skill obliquely through the stream; while the two strangers whiffled and hissed together, in an unknown very rapid tongue, and every now and then broke out in loud laughter, hopping about, at one time on the gunwale and the seats, at another on the bottom of the boat.

[1] In the middle of the night, truly! In the middle of the Dark Ages, when what with Mahomedan Conquests, what with Christian Crusadings, Destructions of Constantinople, Discoveries of America, the TIME-River was indeed swoln to overflowing; and the *Ignes Fatui* (of Elegant Culture, of Literature) must needs feel in haste to get over into Existence, being much wanted; and apply to the Priesthood (respectable old Ferryman, roused out of sleep thereby!), who willingly introduced them, mischievous ungrateful imps as they were.—D. T.

"The boat is heeling!" cried the old man; "if you don't be quiet, it will overset; be seated, gentlemen of the wisp!"

At this advice they burst into a fit of laughter, mocked the old man, and were more unquiet than ever. He bore their mischief with patience, and soon reached the farther shore.

"Here is for your labour!" cried the travellers; and as they shook themselves, a heap of glittering gold-pieces jingled down into the wet boat. "For Heaven's sake, what are you about?" cried the old man; "you will ruin me forever! Had a single piece of gold got into the water, the stream, which cannot suffer gold, would have risen in horrid waves, and swallowed both my skiff and me; and who knows how it might have fared with you in that case? here, take back your gold."

"We can take nothing back, which we have once shaken from us," said the Lights.

"Then you give me the trouble," said the old man, stooping down, and gathering the pieces into his cap, "of raking them together, and carrying them ashore and burying them."

The Lights had leaped from the boat, but the old man cried: "Stay; where is my fare?"

"If you take no gold, you may work for nothing," cried the Will-o'-wisps.—"You must know that I am only to be paid with fruits of the earth."—"Fruits of the earth? we despise them, and have never tasted them."—"And yet I cannot let you go, till you have promised that you will deliver me three Cabbages, three Artichokes, and three large Onions."

The Lights were making-off with jests; but they felt themselves, in some inexplicable manner, fastened to the ground: it was the unpleasantest feeling they had ever had. They engaged to pay him his demand as soon as possible: he let them go, and pushed away. He was gone a good distance, when they called to him: "Old man! Holla, old man! the main point is forgotten!"[1] He was off, however, and did not hear them. He had fallen quietly down that side of the River, where, in a rocky spot, which the water never reached, he meant to bury the pernicious gold. Here, between two high crags, he found a monstrous chasm; shook the metal into it, and steered back to his cottage.

Now in this chasm lay the fair green Snake, who was roused from her sleep by the gold coming chinking down.[2] No sooner did she fix her eye on the glittering coins than she ate them all up, with the greatest

[1] What could this be? To ask whither their next road lay? It was useless to ask there: the respectable old Priesthood 'did not hear them.'—D. T.

[2] THOUGHT, Understanding, roused from her long sleep by the first produce of modern Belles Lettres; which she eagerly devours.—D. T

relish, on the spot; and carefully picked out such pieces as were scattered in the chinks of the rock.

Scarcely had she swallowed them, when, with extreme delight, she began to feel the metal melting in her inwards, and spreading all over her body; and soon, to her lively joy, she observed that she was grown transparent and luminous. Long ago she had been told that this was possible; but now being doubtful whether such a light could last, her curiosity and the desire to be secure against the future, drove her from her cell, that she might see who it was that had shaken-in this precious metal. She found no one. The more delightful was it to admire her own appearance, and her graceful brightness, as she crawled along through roots and bushes, and spread out her light among the grass. Every leaf seemed of emerald, every flower was dyed with new glory. It was in vain that she crossed the solitary thickets; but her hopes rose high, when, on reaching the open country, she perceived from afar, a brilliancy resembling her own. "Shall I find my like at last, then?" cried she, and hastened to the spot. The toil of crawling through bog and reeds gave her little thought; for though she liked best to live in dry grassy spots of the mountains, among the clefts of rocks, and for most part fed on spicy herbs, and slaked her thirst with mild dew and fresh spring-water, yet for the sake of this dear gold, and in the hope of this glorious light, she would have undertaken anything you could propose to her.

At last, with much fatigue, she reached a wet rushy spot in the swamp, where our two Will-o'-wisps were frisking to and fro. She shoved herself along to them; saluted them, was happy to meet such pleasant gentlemen related to her family. The Lights glided towards her, skipped up over her, and laughed in their fashion. "Lady Cousin," said they, "you are of the horizontal line, yet what of that? It is true we are related only by the look; for, observe you," here both the Flames, compressing their whole breadth, made themselves as high and peaked as possible, "how prettily this taper length beseems us gentlemen of the vertical line! Take it not amiss of us, good Lady; what family can boast of such a thing? Since there ever was a Jack-o'-lantern in the world, no one of them has either sat or lain."

The Snake felt exceedingly uncomfortable in the company of these relations; for, let her hold her head as high as possible, she found that she must bend it to the earth again, would she stir from the spot;[1] and if in the dark thicket she had been extremely satisfied with her appear-

[1] True enough: Thought cannot fly and dance, as your wildfire of Belles Lettres may; she proceeds in the systole-diastole, up-and-down method; and must ever 'bend her head to the earth again' (in the way of Baconian Experiment), or she will not stir from the spot.—D T.

ance, her splendour in the presence of these cousins seemed to lessen every moment, nay, she was afraid that at last it would go out entirely.

In this embarrassment she hastily asked: If the gentlemen could not inform her, whence the glittering gold came, that had fallen a short while ago into the cleft of the rock; her own opinion was, that it had been a golden shower, and had trickled down direct from the sky. The Will-o'-wisps laughed, and shook themselves, and a multitude of gold-pieces came clinking down about them. The Snake pushed nimbly forwards to eat the coin. "Much good may it do you, Mistress," said the dapper gentlemen: "we can help you to a little more." They shook themselves again several times with great quickness, so that the Snake could scarcely gulp the precious victuals fast enough. Her splendour visibly began increasing; she was really shining beautifully, while the Lights had in the mean time grown rather lean and short of stature, without however in the smallest losing their good-humour.

"I am obliged to you forever," said the Snake, having got her wind again after the repast; "ask of me what you will; all that I can I will do."

"Very good!" cried the Lights. "Then tell us where the fair Lily dwells? Lead us to the fair Lily's palace and garden; and do not lose a moment, we are dying of impatience to fall down at her feet."

"This service," said the Snake with a deep sigh, "I cannot now do for you. The fair Lily dwells, alas, on the other side of the water."—"Other side of the water? And we have come across it, this stormy night! How cruel is the River to divide us! Would it not be possible to call the old man back?"

"It would be useless," said the Snake; "for if you found him ready on the bank, he would not take you in; he can carry any one to this side, none to yonder."

"Here is a pretty kettle of fish!" cried the Lights: "are there no other means of getting through the water?"—"There are other means, but not at this moment. I myself could take you over, gentlemen, but not till noon."—"That is an hour we do not like to travel in."—"Then you may go across in the evening, on the great Giant's shadow."—"How is that?"—"The great Giant lives not far from this; with his body he has no power; his hands cannot lift a straw, his shoulders could not bear a faggot of twigs; but with his shadow he has power over much, nay, all.[1] At sunrise and sunset therefore he is strongest; so at evening you merely put yourself upon the back of his shadow, the Giant walks softly to the bank, and the shadow carries you across the water. But if you please, about the hour of noon, to be in waiting at that corner of the

[1] Is not SUPERSTITION strongest when the sun is low? with body, powerless; with shadow, omnipotent?—D. T.

wood where the bushes overhang the bank, I myself will take you over and present you to the fair Lily: or on the other hand, if you dislike the noontide, you have just to go at nightfall to that bend of the rocks, and pay a visit to the Giant; he will certainly receive you like a gentleman."

With a slight bow, the Flames went off; and the Snake at bottom was not discontented to get rid of them; partly that she might enjoy the brightness of her own light, partly satisfy a curiosity with which, for a long time, she had been agitated in a singular way.

In the chasm, where she often crawled hither and thither, she had made a strange discovery. For although in creeping up and down this abyss, she had never had a ray of light, she could well enough discriminate the objects in it, by her sense of touch. Generally she met with nothing but irregular productions of Nature; at one time she would wind between the teeth of large crystals, at another she would feel the barbs and hairs of native silver, and now and then carry out with her to the light some straggling jewels.[1] But to her no small wonder, in a rock which was closed on every side, she had come on certain objects which betrayed the shaping hand of man. Smooth walls on which she could not climb, sharp regular corners, well-formed pillars; and what seemed strangest of all, human figures which she had entwined more than once, and which appeared to her to be of brass, or of the finest polished marble. All these experiences she now wished to combine by the sense of sight, thereby to confirm what as yet she only guessed. She believed she could illuminate the whole of that subterranean vault by her own light; and hoped to get acquainted with these curious things at once. She hastened back; and soon found, by the usual way, the cleft by which she used to penetrate the Sanctuary.

On reaching the place, she gazed around with eager curiosity; and though her shining could not enlighten every object in the rotunda, yet those nearest her were plain enough. With astonishment and reverence she looked up into a glancing niche, where the image of an august King stood formed of pure Gold. In size the figure was beyond the stature of man, but by its shape it seemed the likeness of a little rather than a tall person. His handsome body was encircled with an unadorned mantle; and a garland of oak bound his hair together.

No sooner had the Snake beheld this reverend figure, than the King began to speak, and asked: "Whence comest thou?"—"From the chasms where the gold dwells," said the Snake.—"What is grander

[1] Primitive employments, and attainments, of Thought, in this dark den whither it is sent to dwell. For many long ages, it discerns 'nothing but irregular productions of Nature'; having indeed to pick material bed and board out of Nature and her irregular productions. —D. T.

than gold?" inquired the King.—"Light," replied the Snake.—"What is more refreshing than light?" said he.—"Speech," answered she.

During this conversation, she had squinted to a side, and in the nearest niche perceived another glorious image. It was a Silver King in a sitting posture; his shape was long and rather languid; he was covered with a decorated robe; crown, girdle and sceptre were adorned with precious stones: the cheerfulness of pride was in his countenance; he seemed about to speak, when a vein which ran dimly-coloured over the marble wall, on a sudden became bright, and diffused a cheerful light throughout the whole Temple. By this brilliancy the Snake perceived a third King, made of Brass, and sitting mighty in shape, leaning on his club, adorned with a laurel garland, and more like a rock than a man. She was looking for the fourth, which was standing at the greatest distance from her; but the wall opened, while the glittering vein started and split, as lightning does, and disappeared.

A Man of middle stature, entering through the cleft, attracted the attention of the Snake. He was dressed like a peasant, and carried in his hand a little Lamp, on whose still flame you liked to look, and which in a strange manner, without casting any shadow, enlightened the whole dome.[1]

"Why comest thou, since we have light?" said the golden King.—"You know that I may not enlighten what is dark."[2]—"Will my Kingdom end?" said the silver King.—"Late or never," said the old Man.

With a stronger voice the brazen King began to ask: "When shall I arise?"—"Soon," replied the Man.—"With whom shall I combine?" said the King.—"With thy elder brothers," said the Man.—"What will the youngest do?" inquired the King.—"He will sit down," replied the Man.

"I am not tired," cried the fourth King, with a rough faltering voice.[3]

While this speech was going on, the Snake had glided softly round the Temple, viewing everything; she was now looking at the fourth King close by him. He stood leaning on a pillar; his considerable form was heavy rather than beautiful. But what metal it was made of could not be determined. Closely inspected, it seemed a mixture of the three metals which its brothers had been formed of. But in the

[1] Poetic Light, celestial Reason!—D. T.

Let the reader, in one word, attend well to these four Kings: much annotation from D. T. is here necessarily swept out.—O. Y.

[2] What is wholly dark. Understanding precedes Reason: modern Science is come; modern Poesy is still but coming,—in Goethe (and whom else?).—D. T.

[3] Consider these Kings as Eras of the World's History; no, not as Eras, but as Principles which jointly or severally rule Eras. Alas, poor we, in this chaotic, soft-soldered 'transitionary age,' are so unfortunate as to live under the Fourth King.—D. T

founding, these materials did not seem to have combined together fully; gold and silver veins ran irregularly through a brazen mass, and gave the figure an unpleasant aspect.

Meanwhile the gold King was asking of the Man, "How many secrets knowest thou?"—"Three," replied the Man.—"Which is the most important?" said the silver King.—"The open one," replied the other.[1] —"Wilt thou open it to us also?" said the brass King.—"When I know the fourth," replied the Man.—"What care I?" grumbled the composite King, in an undertone.

"I know the fourth," said the Snake; approached the old Man, and hissed somewhat in his ear. "The time is at hand!" cried the old Man, with a strong voice. The temple reëchoed, the metal statues sounded; and that instant the old Man sank away to the westward, and the Snake to the eastward; and both of them passed through the clefts of the rock, with the greatest speed.

All the passages, through which the old Man travelled, filled themselves, immediately behind him, with gold; for his Lamp had the strange property of changing stone into gold, wood into silver, dead animals into precious stones, and of annihilating all metals. But to display this power, it must shine alone. If another light were beside it, the Lamp only cast from it a pure clear brightness, and all living things were refreshed by it.[2]

The old Man entered his cottage, which was built on the slope of the hill. He found his Wife in extreme distress. She was sitting at the fire weeping, and refusing to be consoled. "How unhappy am I!" cried she: "Did not I entreat thee not to go away tonight?"—"What is the matter, then?" inquired the husband, quite composed.

"Scarcely wert thou gone," said she, sobbing, "when there came two noisy Travellers to the door: unthinkingly I let them in; they seemed to be a couple of genteel, very honourable people; they were dressed in flames, you would have taken them for Will-o'-wisps. But no sooner were they in the house, than they began, like impudent varlets, to compliment me,[3] and grew so forward that I feel ashamed to think of it."

"No doubt," said the husband with a smile, "the gentlemen were jesting: considering thy age, they might have held by general politeness."

"Age! what age?" cried the Wife: "wilt thou always be talking of

[1] Reader, hast thou any glimpse of the 'open secret'? I fear, not.—D. T. Writer, art thou a goose? I fear, yes.—O. Y.

[2] In Illuminated Ages, the Age of Miracles is said to cease; but it is only we that cease to see it, for we are still 'refreshed by it.'—D. T.

[3] Poor old Practical Endeavour! Listen to many an *encyclopedic* Diderot, humanised *Philosophe*, didactic singer, march-of-intellect man, and other 'impudent varlets' (who would never put their own finger to the work); and hear what 'compliments' they uttered.—D. T.

my age? How old am I, then?—General politeness! But I know what I know. Look round there what a face the walls have; look at the old stones, which I have not seen these hundred years; every film of gold have they licked away, thou couldst not think how fast; and still they kept assuring me that it tasted far beyond common gold. Once they had swept the walls, the fellows seemed to be in high spirits, and truly in that little while they had grown much broader and brighter. They now began to be impertinent again, they patted me, and called me their queen, they shook themselves, and a shower of gold-pieces sprang from them; see how they are shining there under the bench! But ah, what misery! Poor Mops ate a coin or two; and look, he is lying in the chimney, dead. Poor Pug! O well-a-day! I did not see it till they were gone; else I had never promised to pay the Ferryman the debt they owe him."—"What do they owe him?" said the Man.—"Three Cabbages," replied the Wife, "three Artichokes and three Onions: I engaged to go when it was day, and take them to the River."

"Thou mayest do them that civility," said the old Man; "they may chance to be of use to us again."

"Whether they will be of use to us I know not; but they promised and vowed that they would."

Meantime the fire on the hearth had burnt low; the old Man covered-up the embers with a heap of ashes, and put the glittering gold-pieces aside; so that his little Lamp now gleamed alone, in the fairest brightness. The walls again coated themselves with gold, and Mops changed into the prettiest onyx that could be imagined. The alternation of the brown and black in this precious stone made it the most curious piece of workmanship.

"Take thy basket," said the Man, "and put the onyx into it; then take the three Cabbages, the three Artichokes and the three Onions, place them round little Mops, and carry them to the River. At noon the Snake will take thee over; visit the fair Lily, give her the onyx, she will make it alive by her touch, as by her touch she kills whatever is alive already. She will have a true companion in the little dog. Tell her, Not to mourn; her deliverance is near; the greatest misfortune she may look upon as the greatest happiness; for the time is at hand."

The old Woman filled her basket, and set out as soon as it was day. The rising sun shone clear from the other side of the River, which was glittering in the distance: the old Woman walked with slow steps, for the basket pressed upon her head, and it was not the onyx that so burdened her. Whatever lifeless thing she might be carrying, she did not feel the weight of it; on the other hand, in those cases the basket rose aloft, and hovered along above her head. But to carry any fresh

herbage, or any little living animal, she found exceedingly laborious.[1] She had travelled on for some time, in a sullen humour, when she halted suddenly in fright, for she had almost trod upon the Giant's shadow, which was stretching towards her across the plain. And now, lifting up her eyes, she saw the monster of a Giant himself, who had been bathing in the River, and was just come out,[2] and she knew not how she should avoid him. The moment he perceived her, he began saluting her in sport, and the hands of his shadow soon caught hold of the basket. With dexterous ease they picked away from it a Cabbage, an Artichoke and an Onion, and brought them to the Giant's mouth, who then went his way up the River, and let the Woman go in peace.

She considered whether it would not be better to return, and supply from her garden the pieces she had lost; and amid these doubts, she still kept walking on, so that in a little while she was at the bank of the River. She sat long waiting for the Ferryman, whom she perceived at last, steering over with a very singular traveller. A young, noble-looking, handsome man, whom she could not gaze upon enough, stept out of the boat.

"What is it you bring?" cried the old Man.—"The greens which those two Will-o'-wisps owe you," said the Woman, pointing to her ware. As the Ferryman found only two of each sort, he grew angry, and declared he would have none of them. The Woman earnestly entreated him to take them; told him that she could not now go home, and that her burden for the way which still remained was very heavy. He stood by his refusal, and assured her that it did not rest with him. "What belongs to me," said he, "I must leave lying nine hours in a heap, touching none of it, till I have given the River its third." After much higgling, the old Man at last replied: "There is still another way. If you like to pledge yourself to the River, and declare yourself its debtor, I will take the six pieces; but there is some risk in it."—"If I keep my word, I shall run no risk?"—"Not the smallest. Put your hand into the stream," continued he, "and promise that within four-and-twenty hours you will pay the debt."

The old Woman did so; but what was her affright, when on drawing out her hand, she found it black as coal! She loudly scolded the old Ferryman; declared that her hands had always been the fairest part of her; that in spite of her hard work, she had all along contrived to keep

[1] Why so? Is it because with lifeless things' (with inanimate *machinery*) all goes like clock-work, which it is, and 'the basket hovers aloft'; while with living things (were it but the culture of forest-trees) poor Endeavour has more difficulty?—D. T. Or is it chiefly because a Tale must be a Tale?—O. Y.

[2] Very proper in the huge Loggerhead *Superstition*, to bathe himself in the element of Time, and get refreshment thereby.—D. T

these noble members white and dainty. She looked at the hand with indignation, and exclaimed in a despairing tone: "Worse and worse! Look, it is vanishing entirely; it is grown far smaller than the other."[1]

"For the present it but seems so," said the old Man; "if you do not keep your word, however, it may prove so in earnest. The hand will gradually diminish, and at length disappear altogether, though you have the use of it as formerly. Everything as usual you will be able to perform with it, only nobody will see it."—"I had rather that I could not use it, and no one could observe the want," cried she: "but what of that, I will keep my word, and rid myself of this black skin, and all anxieties about it." Thereupon she hastily took up her basket, which mounted of itself over her head, and hovered free above her in the air, as she hurried after the youth, who was walking softly and thoughtfully down the bank. His noble form and strange dress had made a deep impression on her.

His breast was covered with a glittering coat of mail; in whose wavings might be traced every motion of his fair body. From his shoulders hung a purple cloak; around his uncovered head flowed abundant brown hair in beautiful locks: his graceful face, and his well-formed feet were exposed to the scorching of the sun. With bare soles, he walked composedly over the hot sand; and a deep inward sorrow seemed to blunt him against all external things.

The garrulous old Woman tried to lead him into conversation; but with his short answers he gave her small encouragement or information; so that in the end, notwithstanding the beauty of his eyes, she grew tired of speaking with him to no purpose, and took leave of him with these words: "You walk too slow for me, worthy sir; I must not lose a moment, for I have to pass the River on the green Snake, and carry this fine present from my husband to the fair Lily." So saying she stept faster forward; but the fair Youth pushed on with equal speed, and hastened to keep up with her. "You are going to the fair Lily!" cried he; "then our roads are the same. But what present is this you are bringing her?"

"Sir," said the Woman, "it is hardly fair, after so briefly dismissing the questions I put to you, to inquire with such vivacity about my secrets. But if you like to barter, and tell me your adventures, I will not conceal from you how it stands with me and my presents." They soon made a bargain; the dame disclosed her circumstances to him; told the history of the Pug, and let him see the singular gift.

He lifted this natural curiosity from the basket, and took Mops, who

[1] A dangerous thing to pledge yourself to the Time-River;—as many a National Debt, and the like, blackening, bewitching the 'beautiful hand' of Endeavour, can witness.—D. T. Heavens!—O. Y.

seemed as if sleeping softly, into his arms. "Happy beast!" cried he; "thou wilt be touched by her hands, thou wilt be made alive by her; while the living are obliged to fly from her presence to escape a mournful doom. Yet why say I mournful? Is it not far sadder and more frightful to be injured by her look, than it would be to die by her hand? Behold me," said he to the Woman; "at my years, what a miserable fate have I to undergo! This mail which I have honourably borne in war, this purple which I sought to merit by a wise reign, Destiny has left me; the one as a useless burden, the other as an empty ornament. Crown, and sceptre, and sword are gone; and I am as bare and needy as any other son of earth; for so unblessed are her bright eyes, that they take from every living creature they look on all its force, and those whom the touch of her hand does not kill are changed to the state of shadows wandering alive."

Thus did he continue to bewail, nowise contenting the old Woman's curiosity, who wished for information not so much of his internal as of his external situation. She learned neither the name of his father, nor of his kingdom. He stroked the hard Mops, whom the sunbeams and the bosom of the youth had warmed as if he had been living. He inquired narrowly about the Man with the Lamp, about the influences of the sacred light, appearing to expect much good from it in his melancholy case.

Amid such conversation, they descried from afar the majestic arch of the Bridge, which extended from the one bank to the other, glittering with the strangest colours in the splendours of the sun. Both were astonished; for until now they had never seen this edifice so grand. "How!" cried the Prince, "was it not beautiful enough, as it stood before our eyes, piled out of jasper and agate? Shall we not fear to tread it, now that it appears combined, in graceful complexity of emerald and chrysopras and chrysolite?" Neither of them knew the alteration that had taken place upon the Snake: for it was indeed the Snake, who every day at noon curved herself over the River, and stood forth in the form of a bold-swelling bridge.[1] The travellers stept upon it with a reverential feeling, and passed over it in silence.

No sooner had they reached the other shore, than the bridge began to heave and stir; in a little while, it touched the surface of the water, and the green Snake in her proper form came gliding after the wanderers. They had scarcely thanked her for the privilege of crossing on her back, when they found that, besides them three, there must be other persons in the company, whom their eyes could not discern. They heard a hissing, which the Snake also answered with a hissing; they listened,

[1] If aught can overspan the Time-River, then what but Understanding, but Thought, in its moment of plenitude, in its favourable noon-moment?—D. T.

and at length caught what follows: "We shall first look about us in the fair Lily's Park," said a pair of alternating voices; "and then request you at nightfall, so soon as we are anywise presentable, to introduce us to this paragon of beauty. At the shore of the great Lake you will find us."—"Be it so," replied the Snake; and a hissing sound died away in the air.

Our three travellers now consulted in what order they should introduce themselves to the fair Lady; for however many people might be in her company, they were obliged to enter and depart singly, under pain of suffering very hard severities.

The Woman with the metamorphosed Pug in the basket first approached the garden, looking round for her Patroness; who was not difficult to find, being just engaged in singing to her harp. The finest tones proceeded from her, first like circles on the surface of the still lake, then like a light breath they set the grass and the bushes in motion. In a green enclosure, under the shadow of a stately group of many diverse trees, was she seated; and again did she enchant the eyes, the ears and the heart of the Woman, who approached with rapture, and swore within herself that since she saw her last, the fair one had grown fairer than ever. With eager gladness, from a distance, she expressed her reverence and admiration for the lovely maiden. "What a happiness to see you! what a Heaven does your presence spread around you! How charmingly the harp is leaning on your bosom, how softly your arms surround it, how it seems as if longing to be near you, and how it sounds so meekly under the touch of your slim fingers! Thrice-happy youth, to whom it were permitted to be there!"

So speaking she approached; the fair Lily raised her eyes; let her hands drop from the harp, and answered: "Trouble me not with untimely praise; I feel my misery but the more deeply. Look here, at my feet lies the poor Canary-bird, which used so beautifully to accompany my singing; it would sit upon my harp, and was trained not to touch me; but today, while I, refreshed by sleep, was raising a peaceful morning hymn, and my little singer was pouring forth his harmonious tones more gaily than ever, a Hawk darts over my head; the poor little creature, in affright, takes refuge in my bosom, and I feel the last palpitations of its departing life. The plundering Hawk indeed was caught by my look, and fluttered fainting down into the water; but what can his punishment avail me? my darling is dead, and his grave will but increase the mournful bushes of my garden."

"Take courage, fairest Lily!" cried the Woman, wiping off a tear, which the story of the hapless maiden had called into her eyes; "compose yourself; my old man bids me tell you to moderate your lamenting, to look upon the greatest misfortune as a forerunner of the greatest

happiness, for the time is at hand; and truly," continued she, "the world is going strangely on of late. Do but look at my hand, how black it is! As I live and breathe, it is grown far smaller: I must hasten, before it vanish altogether! Why did I engage to do the Will-o'-wisps a service, why did I meet the Giant's shadow, and dip my hand in the River? Could you not afford me a single cabbage, an artichoke and an onion? I would give them to the River, and my hand were white as ever, so that I could almost show it with one of yours."

"Cabbages and onions thou mayest still find; but artichokes thou wilt search for in vain. No plant in my garden bears either flowers or fruit; but every twig that I break, and plant upon the grave of a favourite, grows green straightway, and shoots up in fair boughs. All these groups, these bushes, these groves my hard destiny has so raised around me. These pines stretching out like parasols, these obelisks of cypresses, these colossal oaks and beeches, were all little twigs planted by my hand, as mournful memorials in a soil that otherwise is barren."[1]

To this speech the old Woman had paid little heed; she was looking at her hand, which, in presence of the fair Lily, seemed every moment growing blacker and smaller. She was about to snatch her basket and hasten off, when she noticed that the best part of her errand had been forgotten. She lifted out the onyx Pug, and set him down, not far from the fair one, in the grass. "My husband," said she, "sends you this memorial; you know that you can make a jewel live by touching it. This pretty faithful dog will certainly afford you much enjoyment; and my grief at losing him is brightened only by the thought that he will be in your possession."

The fair Lily viewed the dainty creature with a pleased and, as it seemed, with an astonished look. "Many signs combine," said she, "that breathe some hope into me: but ah! is it not a natural deception which makes us fancy, when misfortunes crowd upon us, that a better day is near?

"What can these many signs avail me?
My Singer's Death, thy coal-black Hand?
This Dog of Onyx, that can never fail me?
And coming at the Lamp's command?

From human joys removed forever,
With sorrows compassed round I sit:
Is there a Temple at the River?
Is there a Bridge? Alas, not yet!"

The good old dame had listened with impatience to this singing,

[1] In SUPERNATURALISM truly, what is there either of flower or of fruit? Nothing that will (altogether) content the greedy Time-River. Stupendous, funereal sacred groves, 'in a soil that otherwise is barren!'—D. T.

which the fair Lily accompanied with her harp, in a way that would have charmed any other. She was on the point of taking leave, when the arrival of the green Snake again detained her. The Snake had caught the last lines of the song, and on this matter forthwith began to speak comfort to the fair Lily.

"The prophecy of the Bridge is fulfilled!" cried the Snake: "you may ask this worthy dame how royally the arch looks now. What formerly was untransparent jasper, or agate, allowing but a gleam of light to pass about its edges, is now become transparent precious stone. No beryl is so clear, no emerald so beautiful of hue."

"I wish you joy of it," said Lily; "but you will pardon me if I regard the prophecy as yet unaccomplished. The lofty arch of your bridge can still but admit foot-passengers; and it is promised us that horses and carriages and travellers of every sort shall, at the same moment, cross this bridge in both directions. Is there not something said, too, about pillars, which are to arise of themselves from the waters of the River?"

The old Woman still kept her eyes fixed on her hand; she here interrupted their dialogue, and was taking leave. "Wait a moment," said the fair Lily, "and carry my little bird with you. Bid the Lamp change it into topaz; I will enliven it by my touch; with your good Mops it shall form my dearest pastime: but hasten, hasten; for, at sunset, intolerable putrefaction will fasten on the hapless bird, and tear asunder the fair combination of its form forever."

The old Woman laid the little corpse, wrapped in soft leaves, into her basket, and hastened away.

"However it may be," said the Snake, recommencing their interrupted dialogue, "the Temple is built."

"But it is not at the River," said the fair one.

"It is yet resting in the depths of the Earth," said the Snake; "I have seen the Kings and conversed with them."

"But when will they arise?" inquired Lily.

The Snake replied: "I heard resounding in the Temple these deep words, *The time is at hand.*"

A pleasing cheerfulness spread over the fair Lily's face: "'Tis the second time," said she, "that I have heard these happy words today: when will the day come for me to hear them thrice?"

She arose, and immediately there came a lovely maiden from the grove, and took away her harp. Another followed her, and folded-up the fine carved ivory stool, on which the fair one had been sitting, and put the silvery cushion under her arm. A third then made her appearance, with a large parasol worked with pearls; and looked whether Lily would require her in walking. These three maidens were beyond

expression beautiful; and yet their beauty but exalted that of Lily, for it was plain to every one that they could never be compared to her.[1]

Meanwhile the fair one had been looking, with a satisfied aspect, at the strange onyx Mops. She bent down and touched him, and that instant he started up. Gaily he looked around, ran hither and thither, and at last, in his kindest manner, hastened to salute his benefactress. She took him in her arms, and pressed him to her. "Cold as thou art," cried she, "and though but a half-life works in thee, thou art welcome to me; tenderly will I love thee, prettily will I play with thee, softly caress thee, and firmly press thee to my bosom." She then let him go, chased him from her, called him back, and played so daintily with him, and ran about so gaily and so innocently with him on the grass, that with new rapture you viewed and participated in her joy, as a little while ago her sorrow had attuned every heart to sympathy.

This cheerfulness, these graceful sports were interrupted by the entrance of the woful Youth. He stepped forward, in his former guise and aspect; save that the heat of the day appeared to have fatigued him still more, and in the presence of his mistress he grew paler every moment. He bore upon his hand a Hawk, which was sitting quiet as a dove, with its body shrunk, and its wings drooping.

"It is not kind in thee," cried Lily to him, "to bring that hateful thing before my eyes, the monster, which today has killed my little singer."

"Blame not the unhappy bird!" replied the Youth; "rather blame thyself and thy destiny; and leave me to keep beside me the companion of my woe."

Meanwhile Mops ceased not teasing the fair Lily; and she replied to her transparent favourite, with friendly gestures. She clapped her hands to scare him off; then ran, to entice him after her. She tried to get him when he fled, and she chased him away when he attempted to press near her. The Youth looked on in silence, with increasing anger; but at last, when she took the odious beast, which seemed to him unutterably ugly, on her arm, pressed it to her white bosom, and kissed its black snout with her heavenly lips, his patience altogether failed him, and full of desperation he exclaimed: "Must I, who by a baleful fate exist beside thee, perhaps to the end, in an absent presence; who by thee have lost my all, my very self; must I see before my eyes, that so unnatural a monster can charm thee into gladness, can awaken thy attachment, and enjoy thy embrace? Shall I any longer keep wandering to and fro, measuring my dreary course to that side of the River and to this? No, there is still a spark of the old heroic spirit sleeping in my

[1] Who are these three? Faith, Hope, and Charity, or others of that kin?—D. T. Faith, Hope and Fiddlestick!—O. Y.

bosom; let it start this instant into its expiring flame! If stones may rest in thy bosom, let me be changed to stone; if thy touch kills, I will die by thy hands."

So saying he made a violent movement; the Hawk flew from his finger, but he himself rushed towards the fair one; she held out her hands to keep him off, and touched him only the sooner. Consciousness forsook him; and she felt with horror the beloved burden lying on her bosom. With a shriek she started back, and the gentle Youth sank lifeless from her arms upon the ground.

The misery had happened! The sweet Lily stood motionless gazing on the corpse. Her heart seemed to pause in her bosom; and her eyes were without tears. In vain did Mops try to gain from her any kindly gesture; with her friend, the world for her was all dead as the grave. Her silent despair did not look round for help; she knew not of any help.

On the other hand, the Snake bestirred herself the more actively; she seemed to meditate deliverance; and in fact, her strange movements served at least to keep away, for a little, the immediate consequences of the mischief. With her limber body, she formed a wide circle round the corpse, and seizing the end of her tail between her teeth, she lay quite still.

Ere long one of Lily's fair waiting-maids appeared; brought the ivory folding-stool, and with friendly beckoning constrained her mistress to sit down on it. Soon afterwards there came a second; she had in her hand a fire-coloured veil, with which she rather decorated than concealed the fair Lily's head. The third handed her the harp, and scarcely had she drawn the gorgeous instrument towards her, and struck some tones from its strings, when the first maid returned with a clear round mirror; took her station opposite the fair one; caught her looks in the glass, and threw back to her the loveliest image that was to be found in Nature.[1] Sorrow heightened her beauty, the veil her charms, the harp her grace; and deeply as you wished to see her mournful situation altered, not less deeply did you wish to keep her image, as she now looked, forever present with you.

With a still look at the mirror, she touched the harp; now melting tones proceeded from the strings, now her pain seemed to mount, and the music in strong notes responded to her woe; sometimes she opened her lips to sing, but her voice failed her; and ere long her sorrow melted

[1] Does not man's soul *rest* by Faith, and look in the *mirror* of Faith? Does not Hope 'decorate rather than conceal'? Is not Charity (Love) the beginning of *music*? Behold too, how the Serpent, in this great hour, has made herself a Serpent-of-Eternity; and (even as genuine THOUGHT, in our age, has to do for so much) preserves the seeming dead within her folds, that suspended animation issue not in noisome, horrible, irrevocable dissolution.—D. T.

into tears, two maidens caught her helpfully in their arms, the harp sank from her bosom, scarcely could the quick servant snatch the instrument and carry it aside.

"Who gets us the Man with the Lamp, before the Sun set?" hissed the Snake faintly, but audibly: the maids looked at one another, and Lily's tears fell faster. At this moment came the Woman with the Basket, panting and altogether breathless. "I am lost, and maimed for life!" cried she; "see how my hand is almost vanished; neither Ferryman nor Giant would take me over, because I am the River's debtor; in vain did I promise hundreds of cabbages and hundreds of onions; they will take no more than three; and no artichoke is now to be found in all this quarter."

"Forget your own care," said the Snake, "and try to bring help here; perhaps it may come to yourself also. Haste with your utmost speed to seek the Will-o'-wisps; it is too light for you to see them, but perhaps you will hear them laughing and hopping to and fro. If they be speedy, they may cross upon the Giant's shadow, and seek the Man with the Lamp, and send him to us."

The Woman hurried off at her quickest pace, and the Snake seemed expecting as impatiently as Lily the return of the Flames. Alas! the beam of the sinking Sun was already gilding only the highest summits of the trees in the thicket, and long shadows were stretching over lake and meadow; the Snake hitched up and down impatiently, and Lily dissolved in tears.

In this extreme need, the Snake kept looking round on all sides; for she was afraid every moment that the Sun would set, and corruption penetrate the magic circle, and the fair youth immediately moulder away. At last she noticed sailing high in the air, with purple red feathers, the Prince's Hawk, whose breast was catching the last beams of the Sun. She shook herself for joy at this good omen; nor was she deceived; for shortly afterwards the Man with the Lamp was seen gliding towards them across the Lake, fast and smoothly, as if he had been travelling on skates.

The Snake did not change her posture; but Lily rose and called to him: "What good spirit sends thee, at the moment when we were desiring thee, and needing thee, so much?"

"The spirit of my Lamp," replied the Man, "has impelled me, and the Hawk has conducted me. My Lamp sparkles when I am needed, and I just look about me in the sky for a signal; some bird or meteor points to the quarter towards which I am to turn. Be calm, fairest Maiden! Whether I can help, I know not; an individual helps not, but he who combines himself with many at the proper hour. We will postpone the evil, and keep hoping. Hold thy circle fast," continued he, turning to

the Snake; then set himself upon a hillock beside her, and illuminated the dead body. "Bring the little Bird[1] hither too, and lay it in the circle!" The maidens took the little corpse from the basket, which the old Woman had left standing, and did as he directed.

Meanwhile the Sun had set; and as the darkness increased, not only the Snake and the old Man's Lamp began shining in their fashion, but also Lily's veil gave-out a soft light, which gracefully tinged, as with a meek dawning red, her pale cheeks and her white robe. The party looked at one another, silently reflecting; care and sorrow were mitigated by a sure hope.

It was no unpleasing entrance, therefore, that the Woman made, attended by the two gay Flames, which in truth appeared to have been very lavish in the interim, for they had again become extremely meagre; yet they only bore themselves the more prettily for that, towards Lily and the other ladies. With great tact and expressiveness, they said a multitude of rather common things to these fair persons; and declared themselves particularly ravished by the charm which the gleaming veil[2] spread over Lily and her attendants. The ladies modestly cast down their eyes, and the praise of their beauty made them really beautiful. All were peaceful and calm, except the old Woman. In spite of the assurance of her husband, that her hand could diminish no farther, while the Lamp shone on it, she asserted more than once, that if things went on thus, before midnight this noble member would have utterly vanished.

The Man with the Lamp had listened attentively to the conversation of the Lights; and was gratified that Lily had been cheered, in some measure, and amused by it. And, in truth, midnight had arrived they knew not how. The old Man looked to the stars, and then began speaking: "We are assembled at the propitious hour; let each perform his task, let each do his duty; and a universal happiness will swallow-up our individual sorrows, as a universal grief consumes individual joys."

At these words arose a wondrous hubbub;[3] for all the persons in the party spoke aloud, each for himself, declaring what they had to do; only the three maids were silent; one of them had fallen asleep beside the harp, another near the parasol, the third by the stool; and you could

[1] What are the Hawk and this Canary-bird, which here prove so destructive to one another? Ministering servants, implements, of these two divided Halves of the Human Soul; name them I will not; more is not written.—D. T.

[2] Have not your march-of-intellect Literators always expressed themselves particularly ravished with any glitter from a veil of *Hope*; with 'progress of the species,' and the like?—D. T.

[3] Too true: dost thou not hear it, reader? In this our Revolutionary 'twelfth hour of the night,' all persons speak aloud (some of them by cannon and drums!), 'declaring what they have to do'; and Faith, Hope and Charity (after a few passing compliments from the Belles-Lettres Department), thou seest, have *fallen asleep*!—D. T.

not blame them much, for it was late. The Fiery Youths, after some passing compliments which they devoted to the waiting-maids, had turned their sole attention to the Princess, as alone worthy of exclusive homage.

"Take the mirror," said the Man to the Hawk; "and with the first sunbeam illuminate the three sleepers, and awake them, with light reflected from above."

The Snake now began to move; she loosened her circle, and rolled slowly, in large rings, forward to the River. The two Will-o'-wisps followed with a solemn air: you would have taken them for the most serious Flames in Nature. The old Woman and her husband seized the Basket, whose mild light they had scarcely observed till now; they lifted it at both sides, and it grew still larger and more luminous; they lifted the body of the Youth into it, laying the Canary-bird upon his breast; the Basket rose into the air and hovered above the old Woman's head, and she followed the Will-o'-wisps on foot. The fair Lily took Mops on her arm, and followed the Woman; the Man with the Lamp concluded the procession; and the scene was curiously illuminated by these many lights.

But it was with no small wonder that the party saw, when they approached the River, a glorious arch mount over it, by which the helpful Snake was affording them a glittering path. If by day they had admired the beautiful transparent precious stones, of which the Bridge seemed formed; by night they were astonished at its gleaming brilliancy. On the upper side the clear circle marked itself sharp against the dark sky, but below, vivid beams were darting to the centre, and exhibiting the airy firmness of the edifice. The procession slowly moved across it; and the Ferryman, who saw it from his hut afar off, considered with astonishment the gleaming circle, and the strange lights which were passing over it.[1]

No sooner had they reached the other shore, than the arch began, in its usual way, to swag up and down, and with a wavy motion to approach the water. The Snake then came on land, the Basket placed itself upon the ground, and the Snake again drew her circle round it. The old Man stooped towards her, and said: "What hast thou resolved on?"

"To sacrifice myself rather than be sacrificed," replied the Snake; "promise me that thou wilt leave no stone on shore."

The old Man promised; then addressing Lily: "Touch the Snake," said he, "with thy left hand, and thy lover with thy right." Lily knelt, and touched the Snake and the Prince's body. The latter in the instant seemed to come to life; he moved in the Basket, nay, he raised himself

[1] Well he might, worthy old man; as Pope Pius, for example, did, when he lived in Fontainebleau!—D. T. As our Bishops, when voting for the Reform Bill?—O. Y.

into a sitting posture; Lily was about to clasp him; but the old Man held her back, and himself assisted the Youth to rise, and led him forth from the Basket and the circle.

The Prince was standing; the Canary-bird was fluttering on his shoulder; there was life again in both of them, but the spirit had not yet returned; the fair Youth's eyes were open, yet he did not see, at least he seemed to look on all without participation. Scarcely had their admiration of this incident a little calmed, when they observed how strangely it had fared in the mean while with the Snake. Her fair taper body had crumbled into thousands and thousands of shining jewels: the old Woman reaching at her Basket had chanced to come against the circle; and of the shape or structure of the Snake there was now nothing to be seen, only a bright ring of luminous jewels was lying in the grass.[1]

The old Man forthwith set himself to gather the stones into the Basket; a task in which his wife assisted him. They next carried the Basket to an elevated point on the bank; and here the man threw its whole lading, not without contradiction from the fair one and his wife, who would gladly have retained some part of it, down into the River. Like gleaming twinkling stars the stones floated down with the waves; and you could not say whether they lost themselves in the distance, or sank to the bottom.

"Gentlemen," said he with the Lamp, in a respectful tone to the Lights, "I will now show you the way, and open you the passage; but you will do us an essential service, if you please to unbolt the door, by which the Sanctuary must be entered at present, and which none but you can unfasten."

The Lights made a stately bow of assent, and kept their place. The old Man of the Lamp went foremost into the rock, which opened at his presence; the Youth followed him, as if mechanically; silent and uncertain, Lily kept at some distance from him; the old Woman would not be left, and stretched-out her hand, that the light of her husband's Lamp might still fall upon it. The rear was closed by the two Will-o'-wisps, who bent the peaks of their flames towards one another, and appeared to be engaged in conversation.

They had not gone far till the procession halted in front of a large brazen door, the leaves of which were bolted with a golden lock. The Man now called upon the Lights to advance; who required small entreaty, and with their pointed flames soon ate both bar and lock.

The brass gave a loud clang, as the doors sprang suddenly asunder;

[1] So! Your Logics, Mechanical Philosophies, Politics, Sciences, your whole modern System of THOUGHT, is to decease; and old ENDEAVOUR, 'grasping at her basket,' shall 'come against' the inanimate remains, and 'only a bright ring of luminous jewels' shall be left there! Mark well, however, what next becomes of it.—D. T.

and the stately figures of the Kings appeared within the Sanctuary, illuminated by the entering Lights. All bowed before these dread sovereigns, especially the Flames made a profusion of the daintiest reverences.

After a pause, the gold King asked: "Whence come ye?" "From the world," said the old Man.—"Whither go ye?" said the silver King. "Into the world," replied the Man.—"What would ye with us?" cried the brazen King. "Accompany you," replied the Man.

The composite King was about to speak, when the gold one addressed the Lights, who had got too near him: "Take yourselves away from me, my metal was not made for you." Thereupon they turned to the silver King, and clasped themselves about him; and his robe glittered beautifully in their yellow brightness. "You are welcome," said he, "but I cannot feed you; satisfy yourselves elsewhere, and bring me your light." They removed; and gliding past the brazen King, who did not seem to notice them, they fixed on the compounded King. "Who will govern the world?" cried he, with a broken voice. "He who stands upon his feet," replied the old Man.—"I am he," said the mixed King. "We shall see," replied the Man; "for the time is at hand."

The fair Lily fell upon the old Man's neck, and kissed him cordially. "Holy Sage!" cried she, "a thousand times I thank thee; for I hear that fateful word the third time." She had scarcely spoken, when she clasped the old Man still faster; for the ground began to move beneath them; the Youth and the old Woman also held by one another; the Lights alone did not regard it.

You could feel plainly that the whole temple was in motion; as a ship that softly glides away from the harbour, when her anchors are lifted; the depths of the Earth seemed to open for the Building as it went along. It struck on nothing; no rock came in its way.

For a few instants, a small rain seemed to drizzle from the opening of the dome; the old Man held the fair Lily fast, and said to her: "We are now beneath the River; we shall soon be at the mark." Ere long they thought the Temple made a halt; but they were in an error; it was mounting upwards.

And now a strange uproar rose above their heads. Planks and beams in disordered combination now came pressing and crashing in at the opening of the dome. Lily and the Woman started to a side; the Man with the Lamp laid hold of the Youth, and kept standing still. The little cottage of the Ferryman,—for it was this which the Temple in ascending had severed from the ground and carried up with it,—sank gradually down, and covered the old Man and the Youth.

The women screamed aloud, and the Temple shook, like a ship running unexpectedly aground. In sorrowful perplexity, the Princess and her old

attendant wandered round the cottage in the dawn ; the door was bolted, and to their knocking no one answered. They knocked more loudly, and were not a little struck, when at length the wood began to ring. By virtue of the Lamp locked up in it, the hut had been converted from the inside to the outside into solid silver. Ere long too its form changed ; for the noble metal shook aside the accidental shape of planks, posts and beams, and stretched itself out into a noble case of beaten ornamented workmanship. Thus a fair little temple stood erected in the middle of the large one ; or if you will, an Altar worthy of the Temple.[1]

By a staircase which ascended from within, the noble Youth now mounted aloft, lighted by the old Man with the Lamp ; and, as it seemed, supported by another, who advanced in a white short robe, with a silver rudder in his hand ; and was soon recognised as the Ferryman, the former possessor of the cottage.

The fair Lily mounted the outer steps, which led from the floor of the Temple to the Altar ; but she was still obliged to keep herself apart from her Lover. The old Woman, whose hand in the absence of the Lamp had grown still smaller, cried : "Am I, then, to be unhappy after all? Among so many miracles, can there be nothing done to save my hand?" Her husband pointed to the open door, and said to her : "See, the day is breaking ; haste, bathe thyself in the River."—"What an advice!" cried she ; "it will make me all black ; it will make me vanish altogether ; for my debt is not yet paid."—"Go," said the Man, "and do as I advise thee ; all debts are now paid."

The old Woman hastened away ; and at that moment appeared the rising Sun, upon the rim of the dome. The old Man stept between the Virgin and the Youth, and cried with a loud voice : "There are three which have rule on Earth ; Wisdom, Appearance and Strength." At the first word, the gold King rose ; at the second, the silver one ; and at the third, the brass King slowly rose, while the mixed King on a sudden very awkwardly plumped down.[2]

Whoever noticed him could scarcely keep from laughing, solemn as the moment was ; for he was not sitting, he was not lying, he was not leaning, but shapelessly sunk together.[3]

[1] Good! The old Church, shaken down 'in disordered combination,' is admitted, in this way, into the new perennial Temple of the Future ; and, clarified into enduring silver by the Lamp, becomes an Altar worthy to stand there. The Ferryman too is not forgotten.—D. T.

[2] Dost thou note this, O reader ; and look back with new clearness on former things? A gold King, a silver and a brazen King : WISDOM, dignified APPEARANCE, STRENGTH ; these three harmoniously united bear rule ; *dis*harmoniously cobbled together in sham union (as in the foolish composite King of our foolish 'transition era'), they, once the gold (or wisdom) is *all* out of them, 'very awkwardly plump down.'—D. T.

[3] As, for example, does not Charles X. (one of the poor fractional composite Realities emblemed herein) rest, even now, 'shapelessly enough sunk together,' at Holyrood, in the city of Edinburgh?—D. T.

The Lights,[1] who till now had been employed upon him, drew to a side; they appeared, although pale in the morning radiance, yet once more well-fed, and in good burning condition; with their peaked tongues, they had dexterously licked-out the gold veins of the colossal figure to its very heart. The irregular vacuities which this occasioned had continued empty for a time, and the figure had maintained its standing posture. But when at last the very tenderest filaments were eaten out, the image crashed suddenly together; and that, alas, in the very parts which continue unaltered when one sits down; whereas the limbs, which should have bent, sprawled themselves out unbowed and stiff. Whoever *could* not laugh was obliged to turn away his eyes; this miserable shape and no-shape was offensive to behold.

The Man with the Lamp now led the handsome Youth, who still kept gazing vacantly before him, down from the Altar, and straight to the brazen King. At the feet of this mighty Potentate lay a sword in a brazen sheath. The young man girt it round him. "The sword on the left, the right free!" cried the brazen voice. They next proceeded to the silver King; he bent his sceptre to the Youth; the latter seized it with his left hand, and the King in a pleasing voice said: "Feed the sheep!" On turning to the golden King, he stooped with gestures of paternal blessing, and pressing his oaken garland on the young man's head, said: "Understand what is highest!"

During this progress, the old Man had carefully observed the Prince. After girding-on the sword, his breast swelled, his arms waved, and his feet trod firmer; when he took the sceptre in his hand, his strength appeared to soften, and by an unspeakable charm to become still more subduing; but as the oaken garland came to deck his hair, his features kindled, his eyes gleamed with inexpressible spirit, and the first word of his mouth was "Lily!"

"Dearest Lily!" cried he, hastening up the silver stairs to her, for she had viewed his progress from the pinnacle of the Altar; "Dearest Lily! what more precious can a man, equipt with all, desire for himself than innocence and the still affection which thy bosom brings me? O my friend!" continued he, turning to the old Man, and looking at the three statues; "glorious and secure is the kingdom of our fathers; but thou hast forgotten the fourth power, which rules the world, earlier, more universally, more certainly, the power of Love." With these words, he fell upon the lovely maiden's neck; she had cast away her veil, and her cheeks were tinged with the fairest, most imperishable red.

Here the old Man said with a smile: "Love does not rule; but it trains,[2] and that is more."

Amid this solemnity, this happiness and rapture, no one had observed

[1] March-of-intellect Lights were well capable of such a thing.—D. T.

[2] It fashions (*bildet*), or educates.—O. Y.

that it was now broad day; and all at once, on looking through the open portal, a crowd of altogether unexpected objects met the eye. A large space surrounded with pillars formed the fore-court, at the end of which was seen a broad and stately Bridge stretching with many arches across the River. It was furnished, on both sides, with commodious and magnificent colonnades for foot-travellers, many thousands of whom were already there, busily passing this way or that. The broad pavement in the centre was thronged with herds and mules, with horsemen and carriages, flowing like two streams, on their several sides, and neither interrupting the other. All admired the splendour and convenience of the structure; and the new King and his Spouse were delighted with the motion and activity of this great people, as they were already happy in their own mutual love.

"Remember the Snake in honour," said the Man with the Lamp; "thou owest her thy life; thy people owe her the Bridge, by which these neighbouring banks are now animated and combined into one land. Those swimming and shining jewels, the remains of her sacrificed body, are the piers of this royal bridge; upon these she has built and will maintain herself." [1]

The party were about to ask some explanation of this strange mystery, when there entered four lovely maidens at the portal of the Temple. By the Harp, the Parasol, and the Folding-stool, it was not difficult to recognise the waiting-maids of Lily; but the fourth, more beautiful than any of the rest, was an unknown fair one, and in sisterly sportfulness she hastened with them through the Temple, and mounted the steps of the Altar.[2]

"Wilt thou have better trust in me another time, good wife?" said the Man with the Lamp to the fair one: "Well for thee, and every living thing that bathes this morning in the River!"

The renewed and beautified old Woman, of whose former shape no trace remained, embraced with young eager arms the Man with the Lamp, who kindly received her caresses. "If I am too old for thee," said he, smiling, "thou mayest choose another husband today; from this hour no marriage is of force, which is not contracted anew."

"Dost thou not know, then," answered she, "that thou too art grown younger?"—"It delights me if to thy young eyes I seem a handsome youth: I take thy hand anew, and am well content to live with thee another thousand years." [3]

1 Honour to her indeed! The Mechanical Philosophy, though dead, has not died and lived in vain; but her works are there: 'upon these *she*' (THOUGHT, new-born, in glorified shape) has built herself and will maintain herself'; and the Natural and Supernatural shall henceforth, thereby, be one.—D. T.

2 Mark what comes of bathing in the TIME-River, at the entrance of a New Era!—D. T.

3 And so REASON and ENDEAVOUR being once more married, and in the honeymoon, need we wish them joy?—D. T.

The Queen welcomed her new friend, and went down with her into the interior of the Altar, while the King stood between his two men, looking towards the Bridge, and attentively contemplating the busy tumult of the people.

But his satisfaction did not last; for ere long he saw an object which excited his displeasure. The great Giant, who appeared not yet to have awoke completely from his morning sleep, came stumbling along the Bridge, producing great confusion all around him. As usual, he had risen stupefied with sleep, and had meant to bathe in the well-known bay of the River; instead of which he found firm land, and plunged upon the broad pavement of the Bridge. Yet although he reeled into the midst of men and cattle in the clumsiest way, his presence, wondered at by all, was felt by none; but as the sunshine came into his eyes, and he raised his hands to rub them, the shadows of his monstrous fists moved to and fro behind him with such force and awkwardness, that men and beasts were heaped together in great masses, were hurt by such rude contact, and in danger of being pitched into the River.[1]

The King, as he saw this mischief, grasped with an involuntary movement at his sword; but he bethought himself, and looked calmly at his sceptre, then at the Lamp and the Rudder of his attendants. "I guess thy thoughts," said the Man with the Lamp; "but we and our gifts are powerless against this powerless monster. Be calm! He is doing hurt for the last time, and happily his shadow is not turned to us."

Meanwhile the Giant was approaching nearer; in astonishment at what he saw with open eyes, he had dropt his hands; he was now doing no injury, and came staring and agape into the fore-court.

He was walking straight to the door of the Temple, when all at once in the middle of the court, he halted, and was fixed to the ground. He stood there like a strong colossal statue, of reddish glittering stone, and his shadow pointed out the hours,[2] which were marked in a circle on the floor around him, not in numbers, but in noble and expressive emblems.

Much delighted was the King to see the monster's shadow turned to some useful purpose; much astonished was the Queen, who, on mounting from within the Altar, decked in royal pomp, with her virgins, first noticed the huge figure, which almost closed the prospect from the Temple to the Bridge.

Meanwhile the people had crowded after the Giant, as he ceased to move; they were walking round him, wondering at his metamorphosis.

[1] Thou rememberest the *Catholic Relief Bill*; witnessest the *Irish Education Bill*? Hast heard, five hundred times, that the 'Church' was 'in Danger,' and now at length believest it? —D. T. Is D. T. of the Fourth Estate, and Popish-Infidel, then?—O. Y.

[2] Bravo!—D. T.

From him they turned to the Temple, which they now first appeared to notice,[1] and pressed towards the door.

At this instant the Hawk with the mirror soared aloft above the dome; caught the light of the Sun, and reflected it upon the group, which was standing on the Altar. The King, the Queen, and their attendants, in the dusty concave of the Temple, seemed illuminated by a heavenly splendour, and the people fell upon their faces. When the crowd had recovered and risen, the King with his followers had descended into the Altar, to proceed by secret passages into his palace; and the multitude dispersed about the Temple to content their curiosity. The three Kings that were standing erect they viewed with astonishment and reverence; but the more eager were they to discover what mass it could be that was hid behind the hangings, in the fourth niche; for by some hand or another, charitable decency had spread over the resting-place of the fallen King a gorgeous curtain, which no eye can penetrate, and no hand may dare to draw aside.

The people would have found no end to their gazing and their admiration, and the crowding multitude would have even suffocated one another in the Temple, had not their attention been again attracted to the open space.

Unexpectedly some gold-pieces, as if falling from the air, came tinkling down upon the marble flags; the nearest passers-by rushed thither to pick them up; the wonder was repeated several times, now here, now there. It is easy to conceive that the shower proceeded from our two retiring Flames, who wished to have a little sport here once more, and were thus gaily spending, ere they went away, the gold which they had licked from the members of the sunken King. The people still ran eagerly about, pressing and pulling one another, even when the gold had ceased to fall. At length they gradually dispersed, and went their way; and to the present hour the Bridge is swarming with travellers, and the Temple is the most frequented on the whole Earth.[2]

[1] Now first: when the beast of a SUPERSTITION-Giant has got his quietus. Right!—D. T.

[2] It is the Temple of the whole civilised Earth. Finally, may I take leave to consider this *Mährchen* as the deepest Poem of its sort in existence, as the only true Prophecy emitted for who knows how many centuries?—D. T. Certainly: England is a free country.—O. Y.

No. 2

NOVELLE[1]

BY GOETHE

[1832]

THE spacious courts of the Prince's Castle were still veiled in thick mists of an autumnal morning; through which veil, meanwhile, as it melted into clearness, you could more or less discern the whole Hunter-company, on horseback and on foot, all busily astir. The hasty occupations of the nearest were distinguishable: there was lengthening, shortening of stirrup-leathers; there was handing of rifles and shot-pouches, there was putting of game-bags to rights; while the hounds, impatient in their leashes, threatened to drag their keepers off with them. Here and there, too, a horse showed spirit more than enough; driven-on by its fiery nature, or excited by the spur of its rider, who even now in the half-dusk could not repress a certain self-complacent wish to exhibit himself. All waited, however, on the Prince, who, taking leave of his young Consort, was now delaying too long.

United a short while ago, they already felt the happiness of consentaneous dispositions; both were of active vivid character; each willingly participated in the tastes and endeavours of the other. The Prince's father had already, in his time, discerned and improved the season when it became evident that all members of the commonwealth should pass their days in equal industry; should all, in equal working and producing, each in his kind, first earn, and then enjoy.

How well this had prospered was visible in these very days, when the chief market was a-holding, which you might well enough have named a fair. The Prince yestereven had led his Princess on horseback through the tumult of the heaped-up wares; and pointed out to her how, on this spot, the Mountain region met the Plain country in profitable barter: he could here, with the objects before him, awaken her attention to the various industry of his Land.

If the Prince at this time occupied himself and his servants almost exclusively with these pressing concerns, and in particular worked incessantly with his Finance-minister, yet would the Huntmaster too have his right; on whose pleading, the temptation could not be resisted to undertake, in this choice autumn weather, a Hunt that had already been postponed; and so for the household itself, and for the many stranger visitants, prepare a peculiar and singular festivity.

The Princess stayed behind with reluctance: but it was proposed to

[1] FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 34.

push far into the Mountains, and stir-up the peaceable inhabitants of the forests there with an unexpected invasion.

At parting, her lord failed not to propose a ride for her, with Friedrich, the Prince-Uncle, as escort; "I will leave thee," said he, "our Honorio too, as Equerry and Page, who will manage all." In pursuance of which words, he, in descending, gave to a handsome young man the needful injunctions; and soon thereafter disappeared with guests and train.

The Princess, who had waved her handkerchief to her husband while still down in the court, now retired to the back apartments, which commanded a free prospect towards the Mountains; and so much the lovelier, as the Castle itself stood on a sort of elevation, and thus, behind as well as before, afforded manifold magnificent views. She found the fine telescope still in the position where they had left it yestereven, when amusing themselves over bush and hill and forest-summit, with the lofty ruins of the primeval Stammburg, or Family Tower; which in the clearness of evening stood out noteworthy, as at that hour with its great light-and-shade masses, the best aspect of so venerable a memorial of old time was to be had. This morning too, with the approximating glasses, might be beautifully seen the autumnal tinge of the trees, many in kind and number, which had struggled up through the masonry, unhindered and undisturbed during long years. The fair dame, however, directed the tube somewhat lower, to a waste stony flat, over which the Hunting-train was to pass: she waited the moment with patience, and was not disappointed; for with the clearness and magnifying power of the instrument her glancing eyes plainly distinguished the Prince and the Head-Equerry; nay, she forbore not again to wave her handkerchief, as some momentary pause and looking-back was fancied perhaps, rather than observed.

Prince-Uncle, Friedrich by name, now with announcement entered, attended by his Painter, who carried a large portfolio under his arm. "Dear Cousin," said the hale old gentleman, "we here present you with the Views of the Stammburg, taken on various sides to show how the mighty Pile, warred-on and warring, has from old time fronted the year and its weather; how here and there its wall had to yield, here and there rush down into waste ruins. However, we have now done much to make the wild mass accessible; for more there wants not to set every traveller, every visitor, into astonishment, into admiration."

As the Prince now exhibited the separate leaves, he continued: "Here where, advancing up the hollow-way through the outer ring-walls, you reach the Fortress proper, rises against us a rock, the firmest of the whole mountain; on this there stands a tower built,—yet where Nature leaves off, and Art and Handicraft begin, no one can distinguish.

Farther you perceive, sidewards, walls abutting on it, and donjons terrace-wise stretching down. But I speak wrong; for, to the eye, it is but a wood that encircles that old summit: these hundred-and-fifty years no axe has sounded there, and the massiest stems have on all sides sprung up; wherever you press inwards to the walls, the smooth maple, the rough oak, the taper pine, with trunk and roots oppose you; round these we have to wind, and pick our footsteps with skill. Do but look how artfully our Master has brought the character of it on paper; how the roots and stems, the species of each distinguishable, twist themselves among the masonry, and the huge boughs come looping through the holes. It is a wilderness like no other; an accidentally unique locality, where ancient traces of the long-vanished power of Man, and the ever-living, ever-working power of Nature show themselves in the most earnest conflict."

Exhibiting another leaf, he went on: "What say you now to the Castle-court, which, become inaccessible by the falling-in of the old gate-tower, had for immemorial time been trodden by no foot? We sought to get at it by a side; have pierced through walls, blasted vaults asunder, and so provided a convenient but secret way. Inside it needed no clearance; here stretches a flat rock-summit, smoothed by Nature: but yet strong trees have, in spots, found luck and opportunity for rooting themselves there; they have softly but decidedly grown up, and now stretch out their boughs into the galleries where the knights once walked to and fro; nay, through the doors and windows into the vaulted halls; out of which we would not drive them: they have even got the mastery, and may keep it. Sweeping away deep strata of leaves, we have found the notablest place, all smoothed, the like of which were perhaps not to be met with in the world.

"After all this, however, it is still to be remarked, and on the spot itself well worth examining, how on the steps that lead up to the main tower, a maple has struck root and fashioned itself to a stout tree, so that you hardly can with difficulty press by it, to mount the battlements and gaze over the unbounded prospect. Yet here too, you linger pleased in the shade; for that tree is it which, high over the whole, wondrously lifts itself into the air.

"Let us thank the brave Artist, then, who so deservingly in various pictures teaches us the whole, even as if we saw it: he has spent the fairest hours of the day and of the season therein, and for weeks long kept moving about these scenes. Here in this corner has there been, for him and the warder we gave him, a pleasant little dwelling fitted up. You could not think, my Best, what a lovely outlook into the country, into court and walls, he has got there. But now when all is once in outline, so pure, so characteristic, he may finish it down here at his ease.

With these pictures we will decorate our garden-hall; and no one shall recreate his eyes over our regular parterres, our groves and shady walks, without wishing himself up there, to follow, in actual sight of the old and of the new, of the stubborn, inflexible, indestructible, and of the fresh, pliant, irresistible, what reflections and comparisons would rise for him."

Honorio entered, with notice that the horses were brought out; then said the Princess, turning to the Uncle: "Let us ride up; and you will show me in reality what you have here set before me in image. Ever since I came among you, I have heard of this undertaking; and now should like, of all things, to see with my own eyes what in the narrative seemed impossible, and in the depicting remains improbable."—"Not yet, my Love," answered the Prince: "What you here saw is what it can become and is becoming; for the present, much in the enterprise stands still amid impediments; Art must first be complete, if Nature is not to shame it."—"Then let us ride at least upwards, were it only to the foot: I have the greatest wish today to look about me far in the world."—"Altogether as you will," replied the Prince.—"Let us ride through the Town, however," continued the Lady, "over the great marketplace, where stands the innumerable crowd of booths, looking like a little city, like a camp. It is as if the wants and occupations of all the families in the land were turned outwards, assembled in this centre, and brought into the light of day: for the attentive observer can descry whatsoever it is that man performs and needs; you fancy, for the moment, there is no money necessary, that all business could here be managed by barter, and so at bottom it is. Since the Prince, last night, set me on these reflections, it is pleasant to consider how here, where Mountain and Plain meet together, both so clearly speak out what they require and wish. For as the highlander can fashion the timber of his woods into a hundred shapes, and mould his iron for all manner of uses, so these others from below come to meet him with most manifold wares, in which often you can hardly discover the material or recognise the aim."

"I am aware," answered the Prince, "that my Nephew turns his utmost care to these things; for specially, on the present occasion, this main point comes to be considered, that one receive more than one gives out: which to manage is, in the long-run, the sum of all Political Economy, as of the smallest private housekeeping. Pardon me, however, my Best: I never like to ride through markets; at every step you are hindered and kept back; and then flames-up in my imagination the monstrous misery which, as it were, burnt itself into my eyes, when I witnessed one such world of wares go off in fire. I had scarcely got to——"

"Let us not lose the bright hours," interrupted the Princess; for the worthy man had already more than once afflicted her with the minute description of that mischance: how he, being on a long journey, resting in the best inn, on the marketplace which was just then swarming with a fair, had gone to bed exceedingly fatigued; and in the night-time been, by shrieks, and flames rolling up against his lodging, hideously awakened.

The Princess hastened to mount her favourite horse: and led, not through the backgate upwards, but through the foregate downwards, her reluctant-willing attendant; for who but would gladly have ridden by her side, who but would gladly have followed after her? And so Honorio too had, without regret, stayed back from the otherwise so wished-for Hunt, to be exclusively at her service.

As was to be anticipated, they could only ride through the market step by step: but the fair Lovely one enlivened every stoppage by some sprightly remark; "I repeat my lesson of yesternight," said she, "since Necessity is trying our patience." And in truth, the whole mass of men so crowded about the riders, that their progress was slow. The people gazed with joy at the young dame; and on so many smiling countenances might be read the pleasure they felt to see that the first woman in the land was also the fairest and gracefulest.

Promiscuously mingled stood Mountaineers, who had built their still dwellings amid rocks, firs and spruces; Lowlanders from hills, meadows and leas; craftsmen of the little towns; and what else had all assembled there. After a quiet glance, the Princess remarked to her attendant, how all these, whencesoever they came, had taken more stuff than necessary for their clothes, more cloth and linen, more ribands for trimming. It is as if the women could not be bushy enough, the men not puffy enough, to please themselves.

"We will leave them that," answered the Uncle: "spend his superfluity on what he will, a man is happy in it; happiest when he therewith decks and dizens himself." The fair dame nodded assent.

So had they, by degrees, got upon a clear space, which led out to the suburbs; when, at the end of many small booths and stands, a larger edifice of boards showed itself, which was scarcely glanced at till an ear-lacerating bellow sounded forth from it. The feeding-hour of the wild-beasts, there exhibited, seemed to have come: the Lion let his forest-and desert-voice be heard in all vigour; the horses shuddered, and all had to remark how, in the peaceful ways and workings of the cultivated world, the king of the wilderness so fearfully announced himself. Coming nearer the booth, you could not overlook the variegated colossal pictures representing with violent colours and strong emblems those foreign beasts; to a sight of which the peaceful burgher was to be irresistibly

enticed. The grim monstrous tiger was pouncing on a blackamoor, on the point of tearing him in shreds; a lion stood earnest and majestic, as if he saw no prey worthy of him; other wondrous particoloured creatures, beside these mighty ones, deserved less attention.

"As we come back," said the Princess, "we will alight and take a nearer view of these gentry."—"It is strange," observed the Prince, "that man always seeks excitement by Terror. Inside, there, the Tiger lies quite quiet in his cage; and here must he ferociously dart upon a black, that the people may fancy the like is to be seen within: of murder and sudden death, of burning and destruction, there is not enough, but balladsingers must at every corner keep repeating it. Good man will have himself frightened a little; to feel the better, in secret, how beautiful and laudable it is to draw breath in freedom."

Whatever of apprehensiveness from such bugbear images might have remained, was soon all and wholly effaced, as, issuing through the gate, our party entered on the cheerfulest of scenes. The road led first up the River, as yet but a small current, and bearing only light boats, but which by and by, as a renowned world-stream, would carry forth its name and waters, and enliven distant lands. They proceeded next through well-cultivated fruit-gardens and pleasure-grounds, softly ascending; and by degrees you could look about you, in the now disclosed, much-peopled region; till first a thicket, then a little wood admitted our riders, and the gracefulest localities refreshed and limited their view. A meadow-vale leading upwards, shortly before mown for the second time, velvet-like to look upon, and watered by a brook rushing briskly out copious at once from the uplands above, received them as with welcome; and so they approached a higher freer station; which, on issuing from the wood, after a stiff ascent, they gained; and could now descry, over new clumps of trees, the old Castle, the goal of their pilgrimage, rising in the distance, as pinnacle of the rock and forest. Backwards, again (for never did one mount hither without turning round), they caught, through accidental openings of the high trees, the Prince's Castle, on the left, lightened by the morning sun; the well-built higher quarter of the Town, softened under light smoke-clouds: and so on, rightwards the under Town, the River in several bendings, with its meadows and mills; on the farther side, an extensive fertile region.

Having satisfied themselves with the prospect, or rather, as usually happens when we look round from so high a station, become doubly eager for a wider, less limited view, they rode on, over a broad stony flat, where the mighty Ruin stood fronting them, as a green-crowned summit, a few old trees far down about its foot: they rode along; and so arrived there, just at the steepest, most inaccessible side. Great rocks jutting out from of old, insensible of every change, firm, well-founded,

stood clenched together there; and so it towered upwards; what had fallen at intervals lay in huge plates and fragments confusedly heaped, and seemed to forbid the boldest any attempt. But the steep, the precipitous is inviting to youth: to undertake it, to storm and conquer it, is for young limbs an enjoyment. The Princess testified desire for an attempt; Honorio was at her hand; the Prince-Uncle, if easier to satisfy, took it cheerfully, and would show that he too had strength: the horses were to wait below among the trees; our climbers make for a certain point, where a huge projecting rock affords standing-room, and a prospect, which indeed is already passing over into the bird's-eye kind, yet folds itself together there picturesquely enough.

The sun, almost at its meridian, lent the clearest light; the Prince's Castle, with its compartments, main buildings, wings, domes and towers, lay clear and stately; the upper Town in its whole extent; into the lower also you could conveniently look, nay, by the telescope distinguish the booths in the marketplace. So furthersome an instrument Honorio would never leave behind: they looked at the River upwards and downwards; on this side, the mountainous, terrace-like, interrupted expanse, on that the upswelling, fruitful land, alternating in level and low hill; places innumerable; for it was long customary to dispute how many of them were here to be seen.

Over the great expanse lay a cheerful stillness, as is common at noon; when, as the Ancients were wont to say, Pan is asleep, and all Nature holds her breath not to awaken him.

"It is not the first time," said the Princess, "that I, on some such high far-seeing spot, have reflected how Nature, all clear, looks so pure and peaceful, and gives you the impression as if there were nothing contradictory in the world; and yet when you return back into the habitation of man, be it lofty or low, wide or narrow, there is ever somewhat to contend with, to battle with, to smooth and put to rights."

Honorio, who meanwhile was looking through the glass at the Town, exclaimed, "See! see! There is fire in the market!" They looked, and could observe some smoke; the flames were smothered in the daylight. "The fire spreads!" cried he, still looking through the glass: the mischief indeed now became noticeable to the good eyes of the Princess; from time to time you observed a red burst of flame, the smoke mounted aloft; and Prince-Uncle said: "Let us return; that is not good; I always feared I should see that misery a second time." They descended, got back to their horses. "Ride," said the Princess to the Uncle, "fast, but not without a groom: leave me Honorio; we will follow without delay." The Uncle felt the reasonableness, nay, necessity of this; and started off down the waste stony slope, at the quickest pace the ground allowed.

As the Princess mounted, Honorio said: "Please your Excellency to ride slow! In the Town as in the Castle, the fire-apparatus is in perfect order; the people, in this unexpected accident, will not lose their presence of mind. Here, moreover, we have bad ground, little stones and short grass; quick riding is unsafe; in any case, before we arrive, the fire will be got under." The Princess did not think so; she observed the smoke spreading, she fancied that she saw a flame flash up, that she heard an explosion; and now in her imagination all the terrific things awoke, which the worthy Uncle's repeated narrative of his experiences in that market-conflagration had too deeply implanted there.

Frightful doubtless had that business been; alarming and impressive enough to leave behind it, painfully through life long, a boding and image of its recurrence,—when in the night-season, on the great booth-covered market-space, a sudden fire had seized booth after booth, before the sleepers in these light huts could be shaken out of deep dreams: the Prince himself, as a wearied stranger arriving only for rest, started from his sleep, sprang to the window, saw all fearfully illuminated; flame after flame, from the right, from the left, darting through each other, rolls quivering towards him. The houses of the marketplace, reddened in the shine, seemed already glowing; threatened every moment to kindle, and burst forth in fire. Below, the element raged without let; planks cracked, laths crackled; the canvas flew abroad, and its dusky fire-peaked tatters whirled themselves round and aloft,—as if bad spirits, in their own element, with perpetual change of shape, were in capricious dance, devouring one another, and there and yonder, would dart-up out from their penal fire. And then, with wild howls, each saved what was at hand: servants and masters laboured to drag forth bales already seized by the flames; to snatch away yet somewhat from the burning shelves, and pack it into the chests, which too they must at last leave a prey to the hastening flame. How many a one could have prayed but for a moment's pause to the loud-advancing fire; as he looked round for the possibility of some device, and was with all his possessions already seized! On the one side, there burnt and glowed already what, on the other, still stood in dark night. Obstinate characters, will-strong men, grimly fronted the grim foe; and saved much, with loss of their eyebrows and hair.—Alas, all this waste confusion now arose anew before the fair spirit of the Princess; the gay morning prospect was all overclouded, and her eyes darkened; wood and meadow had put on a look of strangeness, of danger.

Entering the peaceful vale, heeding little its refreshing coolness, they were but a few steps onwards from the copious fountain of the brook which flowed by them, when the Princess descried, quite down in the thickets, something singular, which she soon recognised for the tiger:

springing on, as she a short while ago had seen him painted, he came towards her; and this image, added to the frightful ones she was already busy with, made the strangest impression. "Fly, your Grace!" cried Honorio, "fly!" She turned her horse towards the steep hill they had just descended. The young man, rushing on towards the monster, drew his pistol and fired when he thought himself near enough; but, alas, without effect; the tiger sprang to a side, the horse faltered, the provoked wild-beast followed his course, upwards straight after the Princess. She galloped, what her horse could, up the steep stony space; scarcely apprehending that so delicate a creature, unused to such exertion, could not hold out. It overdid itself, driven on by the necessitated Princess; it stumbled on the loose gravel of the steep, and again stumbled; and at last fell, after violent efforts, powerless to the ground. The fair dame, resolute and dexterous, failed not instantly to get upon her feet; the horse too rose, but the tiger was approaching; though not with vehement speed; the uneven ground, the sharp stones seemed to damp his impetuosity; and only Honorio flying after him, riding with checked speed along with him, appeared to stimulate and provoke his force anew. Both runners, at the same instant, reached the spot where the Princess was standing by her horse: the Knight bent himself, fired, and with this second pistol hit the monster through the head, so that it rushed down; and now, stretched out in full length, first clearly disclosed the might and terror whereof only the bodily hull was left lying. Honorio had sprung from his horse; was already kneeling on the beast, quenching its last movements, and held his drawn hanger in his right hand. The youth was beautiful; he had come dashing on, as, in sports of the lance and the ring, the Princess had often seen him do. Even so in the riding-course would his bullet, as he darted by, hit the Turk's-head on the pole, right under the turban in the brow; even so would he, lightly prancing up, prick his naked sabre into the fallen mass, and lift it from the ground. In all such arts he was dexterous and felicitous; both now stood him in good stead.

"Give him the rest," said the Princess: "I fear he will hurt you with his claws."—"Pardon!" answered the youth: "he is already dead enough; and I would not hurt the skin, which next winter shall shine upon your sledge."—"Sport not," said the Princess: "whatsoever of pious feeling dwells in the depth of the heart unfolds itself in such a moment."—"I too," cried Honorio, "was never more pious than even now; and therefore do I think of what is joyfulest: I look at the tiger's fell only as it can attend you to do you pleasure."—"It would forever remind me," said she, "of this fearful moment." "Yet is it," replied the youth with glowing cheeks, "a more harmless spoil than when the weapons of slain enemies are carried for show before the victor."—"I

shall bethink me, at sight of it, of your boldness and cleverness; and need not add, that you may reckon on my thanks and the Prince's favour for your life long. But rise; the beast is clean dead; let us consider what is next: before all things rise!"—"As I am once on my knees," replied the youth, "once in a posture which in other circumstances would have been forbid, let me beg at this moment to receive assurance of the favour, of the grace which you vouchsafe me. I have already asked so often of your high Consort for leave and promotion to go on my travels. He who has the happiness to sit at your table, whom you honour with the privilege to entertain your company, should have seen the world. Travellers stream-in on us from all parts; and when a town, an important spot in any quarter of the world comes in course, the question is sure to be asked of us, Were we ever there? Nobody allows one sense, till one has seen all that: it is as if you had to instruct yourself only for the sake of others."

"Rise!" repeated the Princess: "I were loath to wish or request aught that went against the will of my Husband; however, if I mistake not, the cause why he has restrained you hitherto will soon be at an end. His intention was to see you ripened into a complete self-guided nobleman, to do yourself and him credit in foreign parts, as hitherto at court; and I should think this deed of yours was as good a recommendatory passport as a young man could wish for, to take abroad with him."

That, instead of a youthful joy, a certain mournfulness came over his face, the Princess had not time to observe, nor had he to indulge his emotion; for, in hot haste, up the steep, came a woman, with a boy at her hand, straight to the group so well known to us; and scarcely had Honorio, bethinking him, arisen, when they howling and shrieking cast themselves on the carcass; by which action, as well as by their cleanly, decent, yet particoloured and unusual dress, might be gathered that it was the mistress of this slain creature, and the black-eyed, black-locked boy, holding a flute in his hand, her son; weeping like his mother, less violent, but deeply moved, kneeling beside her.

Now came strong outbreakings of passion from this woman; interrupted indeed, and pulse-wise; a stream of words, leaping like a stream in gushes from rock to rock. A natural language, short and discontinuous, made itself impressive and pathetic: in vain should we attempt translating it into our dialects; the approximate purport of it we must not omit. "They have murdered thee, poor beast! murdered without need! Thou wert tame, and wouldst fain have lain down at rest and waited our coming; for thy footballs were sore, thy claws had no force left. The hot sun to ripen them was wanting. Thou wert the beautifulest of thy kind: who ever saw a kingly tiger so gloriously stretched-

out in sleep, as thou here liest, dead, never to rise more? When thou awokest in the early dawn of morning, and openedst thy throat, stretching out thy red tongue, thou wert as if smiling on us; and even when bellowing, thou tookest thy food from the hands of a woman, from the fingers of a child. How long have we gone with thee on thy journeys; how long has thy company been useful and fruitful to us! To us, to us of a very truth, meat came from the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. So will it be no more. Woe! woe!"

She had not done lamenting, when over the smoother part of the Castle Mountain came riders rushing down; soon recognised as the Prince's Hunting-train, himself the foremost. Following their sport, in the backward hills, they had observed the fire-vapours; and fast through dale and ravine, as in fierce chase, taken the shortest path towards this mournful sign. Galloping along the stony vacancy, they stopped and stared at sight of the unexpected group, which in that empty expanse stood out so mark-worthy. After the first recognition, there was silence; some pause of breathing-time, and then what the view itself did not impart, was with brief words explained. So stood the Prince, contemplating the strange unheard-of incident; a circle round him of riders, and followers that had run on foot. What to do was still undetermined; the Prince intent on ordering, executing; when a man pressed forward into the circle; large of stature, particoloured, wondrously apparelled, like wife and child. And now the family, in union, testified their sorrow and astonishment. The man, however, soon restrained himself; bowed in reverent distance before the Prince, and said: "It is not the time for lamenting; alas, my lord and mighty hunter, the Lion too is loose; hither towards the mountains is he gone: but spare him, have mercy, that he perish not like this good beast."

"The Lion!" said the Prince: "Hast thou the trace of him?"—"Yes, Lord! A peasant down there, who had heedlessly taken shelter on a tree, directed me farther up this way, to the left; but I saw the crowd of men and horses here; anxious for tidings of assistance, I hastened hither."—"So then," commanded the Prince, "draw to the left, Huntsmen; you will load your pieces, go softly to work; if you drive him into the deep woods, it is no matter: but in the end, good man, we shall be obliged to kill your animal: why were you improvident enough to let him loose?"—"The fire broke out," replied he; "we kept quiet and attentive; it spread fast, but at a distance from us; we had water enough for our defence; but a heap of powder blew up, and threw the brands on to us, and over our heads; we were too hasty, and are now ruined people."

The Prince was still busy directing; but for a moment all seemed to pause, as a man was observed hastily springing down from the heights

of the old Castle; whom the troop soon recognised for the watchman that had been stationed there to keep the Painter's apartment, while he lodged there and took charge of the workmen. He came running, out of breath, yet in few words soon made known, That the Lion had laid himself down, within the high ring-wall, in the sunshine, at the foot of a large beech, and was behaving quite quietly. With an air of vexation, however, the man concluded: "Why did I take my rifle to town yesternight, to have it cleaned? he had never risen again, the skin had been mine, and I might all my life have had the credit of the thing."

The Prince, whom his military experiences here also stood in stead, for he had before now been in situations where from various sides inevitable evil seemed to threaten, said hereupon: "What surety do you give me that if we spare your Lion, he will not work destruction among us, among my people?"

"This woman and this child," answered the father hastily, "engage to tame him, to keep him peaceable, till I bring up the cage, and then we can carry him back unharmed and without harming any one."

The boy put his flute to his lips; an instrument of the kind once named soft, or sweet flutes; short-beaked like pipes: he, who understood the art, could bring out of it the gracefulest tones. Meanwhile the Prince had inquired of the watchman how the lion came up. "By the hollow-way," answered he, "which is walled-in on both sides, and was formerly the only entrance, and is to be the only one still: two footpaths, which led in elsewhere, we have so blocked-up and destroyed that no human being, except by that first narrow passage, can reach the Magic Castle which Prince Friedrich's talent and taste is making of it."

After a little thought, during which the Prince looked round at the boy, who still continued as if softly preluding, he turned to Honorio, and said: "Thou hast done much today, complete thy task. Secure that narrow path; keep your rifles in readiness, but do not shoot till the creature can no otherwise be driven back: in any case, kindle a fire, which will frighten him if he make downwards. The man and woman take charge of the rest." Honorio rapidly bestirred himself to execute these orders.

The child continued his tune, which was no tune; a series of notes without law, and perhaps even on that account so heart-touching: the bystanders seemed as if enchanted by the movement of a song-like melody, when the father with dignified enthusiasm began to speak in this sort:

"God has given the Prince wisdom, and also knowledge to discern that all God's works are wise, each after its kind. Behold the rock, how he stands fast and stirs not, defies the weather and the sunshine;

primeval trees adorn his head, and so crowned he looks abroad; neither if a mass rush away, will this continue what it was, but falls broken into many pieces and covers the side of the descent. But there too they will not tarry, capriciously they leap far down, the brook receives them, to the river he bears them. Not resisting, not contradictory, angular; no, smooth and rounded, they travel now quicker on their way, arrive, from river to river, finally at the ocean, whither march the giants in hosts, and in the depths whereof dwarfs are busy.

"But who shall exalt the glory of the Lord, whom the stars praise from Eternity to Eternity! Why look ye far into the distance? Consider here the bee: late at the end of harvest she still busily gathers; builds her a house, tight of corner, straight of wall, herself the architect and mason. Behold the ant: she knows her way, and loses it not; she piles her a dwelling of grass-halms, earth-crumbs, and needles of the fir; she piles it aloft and arches it in; but she has laboured in vain, for the horse stamps, and scrapes it all in pieces: lo! he has trodden-down her beams, and scattered her planks; impatiently he snorts, and cannot rest; for the Lord has made the horse comrade of the wind and companion of the storm, to carry man whither he wills, and woman whither she desires. But in the Wood of Palms arose he, the Lion; with earnest step traversed the wildernesses; there rules he over all creatures; his might who shall withstand? Yet man can tame him; and the fiercest of living things has reverence for the image of God, in which too the angels are made, who serve the Lord and his servants. For in the den of Lions Daniel was not afraid; he remained fast and faithful, and the wild bellowing interrupted not his song of praise."

This speech, delivered with expression of a natural enthusiasm, the child accompanied here and there with graceful tones; but now, the father having ended, he, with clear melodious voice and skilful passaging, struck-up his warble; whereupon the father took the flute, and gave note in unison, while the child sang:

From the Dens, I, in a deeper,
Prophet's song of praise can hear;
Angel-host he hath for keeper,
Needs the good man there to fear?

Lion, Lioness, agazing,
Mildly pressing round him came;
Yea, that humble, holy praising,
It hath made them tame.

The father continued, accompanying this strophe with his flute; the mother here and there touched-in as second voice.

Impressive, however, in a quite peculiar degree, it was, when the child

now began to shuffle the lines of the strophe into other arrangement; and thereby if not bring out a new sense, yet heighten the feeling by leading it into self-excitement:

Angel-host around doth hover,
Us in heavenly tones to cheer;
In the Dens our head doth cover,—
Needs the poor child there to fear?

For that humble holy praising
Will permit no evil nigh:
Angels hover, watching, gazing;
Who so safe as I?

Hereupon with emphasis and elevation began all three:

For th' Eternal rules above us,
Lands and oceans rules his will;
Lions even as lambs shall love us,
And the proudest waves be still.

Whetted sword to scabbard cleaving,
Faith and Hope victorious see:
Strong, who, loving and believing,
Prays, O Lord, to thee.

All were silent, hearing, hearkening; and only when the tones ceased could you remark and distinguish the impression they had made. All was as if appeased; each affected in his way. The Prince, as if he now first saw the misery that a little ago had threatened him, looked down on his spouse, who leaning on him forbore not to draw out the little embroidered handkerchief, and therewith covered her eyes. It was blessedness for her to feel her young bosom relieved from the pressure with which the preceding minutes had loaded it. A perfect silence reigned over the crowd; they seemed to have forgotten the dangers: the conflagration below; and above, the rising-up of a dubiously-reposing Lion.

By a sign to bring the horses, the Prince first restored the group to motion; he turned to the woman, and said: "You think, then, that, once find the Lion, you could, by your singing, by the singing of this child, with help of these flute-tones, appease him, and carry him back to his prison, unhurt and hurting no one?" They answered Yes, assuring and affirming; the castellan was given them as guide. And now the Prince started off in all speed with a few; the Princess followed slower, with the rest of the train: mother and son, on their side, under conduct of the warder, who had got himself a musket, mounted up the steeper part of the height.

Before the entrance of the hollow-way which opened their access to

the Castle, they found the hunters busy heaping-up dry brushwood, to have, in any case, a large fire ready for kindling. "There is no need," said the woman: "it will all go well and peaceably, without that."

Farther on, sitting on a wall, his double-barrel resting in his lap, Honorio appeared; at his post, as if ready for every occurrence. However, he seemed hardly to notice our party; he sat as if sunk in deep thoughts, he looked round like one whose mind was not there. The woman addressed him with a prayer not to let the fire be lit; he appeared not to heed her words; she spoke on with vivacity, and cried: "Handsome young man, thou hast killed my tiger, I do not curse thee; spare my lion, good young man, I will bless thee."

Honorio was looking straight out before him, to where the sun on his course began to sink. "Thou lookest to the west," cried the woman; "thou dost well, there is much to do there; hasten, delay not, thou wilt conquer. But first conquer thyself." At this he appeared to give a smile; the woman stept on; could not, however, but look back once more at him: a ruddy sun was irradiating his face; she thought she had never seen a handsomer youth.

"If your child," said the warder now, "with his fluting and singing, can, as you are persuaded, entice and pacify the Lion, we shall soon get mastery of him after, for the creature has lain down quite close to the perforated vaults through which, as the main passage was blocked up with ruins, we had to bore ourselves an entrance into the Castle-court. If the child entice him into this latter, I can close the opening with little difficulty; then the boy, if he like, can glide out by one of the little spiral stairs he will find in the corner. We must conceal ourselves; but I shall so take my place that a rifle-ball can, at any moment, help the poor child in case of extremity."

"All these precautions are unnecessary; God and skill, piety and a blessing, must do the work."—"May be," replied the warder; "however, I know my duties. First, I must lead you, by a difficult path, to the top of the wall, right opposite the vaults and opening I have mentioned: the child may then go down, as into the arena of the show, and lead away the animal, if it will follow him." This was done: warder and mother looked down in concealment, as the child descending the screw-stairs, showed himself in the open space of the Court, and disappeared opposite them in the gloomy opening; but forthwith gave his flute voice, which by and by grew weaker, and at last sank dumb. The pause was bodeful enough; the old hunter, familiar with danger, felt heart-sick at the singular conjuncture; the mother, however, with cheerful face, bending over to listen, showed not the smallest discomposure.

At last the flute was again heard; the child stept forth from the cavern with glittering satisfied eyes, the Lion after him, but slowly, and as it seemed with difficulty. He showed here and there desire to lie down; yet the boy led him in a half-circle through the few disleaved many-tinted trees, till at length, in the last rays of the sun, which poured-in through a hole in the ruins, he set him down, as if transfigured in the bright red light; and again commenced his pacifying song, the repetition of which we also cannot forbear:

From the Dens, I, in a deeper,
Prophet's song of praise can hear;
Angel-host he hath for keeper,
Needs the good man there to fear?

Lion, Lioness, agazing,
Mildly pressing round him came;
Yea, that humble, holy praising,
It hath made them tame.

Meanwhile the Lion had laid itself down quite close to the child, and lifted its heavy right fore-paw into his bosom; the boy as he sung gracefully stroked it; but was not long in observing that a sharp thorn had stuck itself between the balls. He carefully pulled it out; with a smile, took the particoloured silk-handkerchief from his neck, and bound up the frightful paw of the monster; so that his mother for joy bent herself back with outstretched arms; and perhaps, according to custom, would have shouted and clapped applause, had not a hard hand-grip of the warder reminded her that the danger was not yet over.

Triumphantly the child sang on, having with a few tones preluded:

For th' Eternal rules above us,
Lands and oceans rules his will;
Lions even as lambs shall love us,
And the proudest waves be still.

Whetted sword to scabbard cleaving,
Faith and Hope victorious see:
Strong, who, loving and believing,
Prays, O Lord, to thee.

Were it possible to fancy that in the countenance of so grim a creature, the tyrant of the woods, the despot of the animal kingdom, an expression of friendliness, of thankful contentment could be traced, then here was such traceable; and truly the child, in his illuminated look, had the air as of a mighty triumphant victor; the other figure, indeed, not that of one vanquished, for his strength lay concealed in him; but

yet of one tamed, of one given up to his own peaceful will. The child fluted and sang on, changing the lines according to his way, and adding new:

And so to good children bringeth
Blessed Angel help in need;
Fetters o'er the cruel flingeth,
Worthy act with wings doth speed.

So have tamed, and firmly iron'd
To a poor child's feeble knee,
Him the forest's lordly tyrant,
Pious Thought and Melody.

SUMMARY

NOVALIS

No good Book, or good thing of any sort, shows its best face at first: Improvisators, and their literary soap-bubbles. Men of genius: The wise man's errors more instructive than the truisms of a fool. What is called 'reviewing'; showing how a small Reviewer may triumph over a great Author, and what his triumph is worth. The writings of Novalis of too much importance to be lightly passed by (p. 1).—Novalis's birth and parentage: Religious and secluded Childhood: Schooling. Applies himself honestly to business. Death of his first love: Communings with Eternity. Influence on his character of this wreck of his first passionate wish: Doctrine of 'Renunciation.' Peace and cheerfulness of his life: Interest in the physical sciences. Acquaintance and literary coöperation with Schlegel and Tieck. Alarming illness: Hopeful literary projects: Gradual bodily decline, and peaceful death. Manners and personal aspect (9).—Wonderful depth and originality of his writings: His philosophic Mysticism. Idealism not confined to Germany. The Kantean view of the material Universe: Its intellectual and moral bearing on the practical interests of men. Influence on the deep, religious spirit of Novalis: Nature no longer dead hostile Matter; but the veil and mysterious Garment of the Unseen: The Beauty of Goodness, the only real, final possession (21).—Extracts from the *Lehrlinge zu Sais*, etc.; Manifold significance of all natural phenomena to the true observer; Beauty and omnipotence of childlike intuition; How the chastened understanding may be brought into harmony with the deepest intuitions and the most rigid facts: Nature, as viewed by the superstitious fanatic, the utilitarian inquirer, the sceptical idealist, and the regenerate Soul of man: The mechanics and dynamics of Thought; Eclectic Philosophers: Philosophic Fragments (30).—Novalis as a Poet: Extracts from *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. His writings an unfathomed mine, where the keenest intellect may find occupation enough: His power of intense abstraction: His chief fault a certain undue passiveness. Likeness to Dante and Pascal. Intelligent, well-informed minds should endeavour to understand even Mysticism. Mechanical Superciliousness *versus* living Belief in God; the victory not doubtful (43).

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Our grand business, not to *see* what lies dimly in the distance; but to *do* what lies clearly at hand: Prophetic folly, and spiritual contagion. The Present always an important time. The Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense: Cases in point,—from hatching Chickens to developing the young Idea: from 'Interrogating Nature' up to delivering one's soul from Purgatory (p. 56).—No Philosophy of Mind to be found out of Germany. Mathematics all gone to mechanism. Locke's Essay, a singular emblem of the spirit of the times: Scotch and French mental-mechanism. The Machine of Society: Social mechanism more prized than individual worth. All wise inventions or discoveries, all great movements whatsoever spring inevitably from the individual souls of men. Mechanical and Dynamical provinces of human activity: Men have lost their belief in the Invisible; and believe, and hope, and work only in the Visible. Intellectual dapperlings, and their 'closet-logic' rushlights: *One* wise man stronger than *all* men foolish (63).—Religion no longer a thousand-voiced Psalm, from the heart of Man to his invisible Father: but a wise, prudential feeling, grounded on mere calculation. The working Church of England at this moment in the Editors of Newspapers. Even Poetry has no eye for the Invisible: Not a matin or vesper hymn to the Spirit of Beauty; but a fierce clashing of cymbals, as children pass through the fire to Moloch. Our 'superior morality' properly an 'inferior criminality': Truth and Virtue no longer loved, as they ought and must be loved: Beyond money and money's worth, our only blessedness is Popularity (76). — Bright lights, as well as gloomy shadows. The wisdom and heroic worth of our forefathers we may yet recover. The darkest hour is nearest the dawn (80).

ON HISTORY

History, man's earliest and simplest expression of Thought: As we *do* nothing but enact History, so likewise we *say* little but recite it. Ancient and modern historians. Vanity of all would-be 'Philosophies of History': Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, Philosophy must first know how to do it; and above all, have the Experience intelligibly recorded. Infinite complexity of the simplest facts constituting the Experience of Life. The living, actual History of Humanity consists of far other and more fruitful activities than those recorded in history-books (p. 83).—Worth and worthlessness of historic testimonies; the Seer, and mere Onlookers. Inevitable discrepancy between a mere linear Narrative of 'successive events'; and the actual, infinitely-related Aggregate of Activities, the daily record of which could alone constitute a

complete History. Better were it that mere earthly historians should lower their pretensions to Philosophy; and aim only at some faithful picture of the things acted (87).—The historical Artist and the historical Artisan. Growing feeling of the infinite nature of History. Division of labour: The Political and the Ecclesiastical historian: Church History, could it speak wisely, would have momentous secrets to teach. Histories of a less ambitious character. Old healthy identity of Priest and Philosopher. Historic Ideals: Necessity for honest insight (90).

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER AGAIN

The best celebrity does not always spread the fastest. Richter's slow but sure reception in England. His life, like most literary lives, somewhat barren of outward incidents; yet containing a deeper worth than any such interest could impart. Difficulty and value of real Biography. Insufficiency of Otto's Life of Richter (p. 96).—Richter's birth, parentage and pedigree: His Father, a poor, hard-working Clergyman, loved and venerated by his flock. Not by money, or money's worth, that Man lives and has his being: To a rich spirit, Life cannot be poor. Young Paul's Idyl-Kingdom and little Pastoral World sketched by himself; O God! I thank thee for my Father! (104).—Early education: Latin vocables; dreary reading; child-glimpses into the infinity of Nature and his own Soul. In his thirteenth year the family removed to a better church-living at Schwarzenbach. He now got access to books, and better teaching. Early theological speculations, 'inclining strongly to the heterodox side.' Loses his Father: Pecuniary troubles. Aversion to History and Geography. A school-disputation: Paul triumphant over Orthodoxy and dull Authority: 'Silence, Sirrah!' (110).—At Leipzig University: Obtains little furtherance from established teachers; and endeavours to work-out an intellectual basis of his own. Poverty, not in the shape of Parsimony, but in the far sterner one of actual Want. His Mother, quite unable to help herself, could afford him no assistance. A high cheerful Stoicism grew up in him: Wise maxims for so young a man. His first productions: No demand for them. Magazine-writing. He lived, like the young ravens, how he could: He had looked Desperation in the face, and found that for him she was not desperate. Blessings of early poverty (114).—Richter's gallant self-dependence: His free and easy style of dress: Horror of his more courtly neighbours: Seven-years' Costume controversy; and final magnanimous compliance with the wishes of all Christian persons (122).—His singular literary establishment at Hof. Of all literary phenomena, that of a literary man daring to believe that he is *poor*, may be regarded as the rarest. No 'Men of Letters' now; only 'Literary Gentlemen,' and a degree of rickety debility unexampled

in the history of Literature. Richter survives his exclusion from the little 'West-end' of Hof. His sudden and decisive triumph, after a valiant struggle of ten years. His poor Mother is released from her troubles : the Hof household broken up. His reception by the High and titled of his country : His marriage (127).—Removes to Weimar : Illustrious companionship : Literary activity. Receives a pension from the Prince Primate Dalberg : Settles in Baireuth : Public honour and domestic happiness : Unwearied diligence in his vocation. Loss of his only son : Sickness, and almost total blindness : Death (137).—Richter's intellectual and literary character. Extracts : Miniature sketches of Herder, Jacobi, Goethe, Luther, Klopstock, Schiller ; A fair-weather scene ; A bridegroom and bride ; On Daughter-full Houses. Richter's vastness of Imagination : Rapt, deep, Old-Hebrew spirit of his *Dreams* : His Dream of Atheism. A true Poet, and among the highest of his time, though he wrote no verses (141).

LUTHER'S PSALM

The great Reformer's love of music and poetry, one of the most significant features in his character. His poetic feeling not so much expressed in fit Words as in fit Actions. And yet it is the same Luther, whether acting, speaking or writing. His Psalm, *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott* (p. 160).

SCHILLER

Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe. Natural curiosity respecting great men : Value of the scantiest memorials that will help to make them intelligible. It can be no true greatness, that a close inspection would abate a worthy admiration of. The letters of Schiller and Goethe : Their entire sincerity of style : Turn mostly on compositions, publications, philosophies. An instructive record of the mental progress of their respective writers (p. 165).—Schiller's mode of thought and utterance more European than national : His ready and general acceptance with foreigners. High struggle, and prophetic burden of every true Poet. Schiller's personal history. His life emphatically a literary one : something priestlike, almost monastic in his character. His parentage and youth : Schooling : Hardships and oppressions from the Duke of Würtemberg : Not in Law, or Medicine ; nor in any marketable occupation, can his soul find content and a home. His restless struggling to get free. Publication of the *Robbers*. Escape from the harsh tyranny of the Duke. Henceforth a Literary Man ; and need appear in no other character (170).—His mild, honest character everywhere gains him friends. His connexion with Goethe the most important event of his literary life : Their mutual esteem, and zealous coöperation. Schiller's quiet, un-

conquered heroism through fifteen years of unremitted pain. The foolish Happiness-controversy: The whole argument, like every other, lies in the confusion of language: True Welfare, and mere sensuous Enjoyment: Mind *versus* Matter (185)—Schiller's character as a man. In his life the social affections played no deeply absorbing part: It was towards the Ideal, not the Actual, that his faith and hope were chiefly directed: His habits were solitary; his chief business and pleasure lay in silent meditation. Some account of his ordinary mode of life. He mingles little in the controversies of his time; and alludes to them only from afar. His high conception of the mission of the true Poet. His genius reflective rather than creative; philosophical and oratorical rather than essentially poetic. For the most part, the Common is to him still the Common. Closely connected with this imperfection, both as cause and consequence, is his singular want of Humour. Yet there is a tone in some of his later pieces breathing of the very highest region of Art (193). —Schiller's dramatic success. Illustrations of his mental progress; turbid ferocities of the *Robbers*, contrasted with the placidly victorious strength of his maturer works. The like progress visible in his smaller Poems: His *Alpenlied*. Schiller's Philosophic talent: Interest in Kant's System. His *Æsthetic Letters*. Schiller and Goethe (202).

THE NIBELUNGEN LIED

About the year 1757, a certain antiquarian tendency in literature, a fonder, more earnest looking back into the Past began to manifest itself in all nations. Growth and fruit of this tendency in Germany. The *Nibelungen*, a kind of rude German Epos: It belongs specially to us English Teutones, as well as to the German. Northern Archæology, a chaos of immeasurable shadows: The *Heldenbuch*, the most important of these subsidiary Fictions, throws some little light on the *Nibelungen*: Outline of the Story. Early adventures of the brave Siegfried, whose history lies at the heart of the whole Northern Traditions: His Invulnerability, wonderful Sword Balmung, and Cloak of Darkness: His subsequent history belongs to the Song of the Nibelungen (p. 216)— Singular poetic excellence of that old Epic Song: Simplicity, and clear decisive ring of its language: Deeds of high temper, harsh self-denial, daring and death stand embodied in soft, quick-flowing, joyfully-modulated verse: Wonderful skill in the construction of the story; and the healthy subordination of the marvellous to the actual. Abstract of the Poem.—How Siegfried wooed and won the beautiful Chriemhild; and how marvellously he vanquished the Amazonian Brunhild for king Gunther: Heyday of peace and gladdest sunshine. Jealousy of Queen Brunhild: How the two queens rated one another; and how Chriemhild

extinguished Brunhild. Brunhild in black revenge gets Siegfried murdered: Unhappy Chriemhild, her husband's grave is all that remains to her: Her terrible doomsday vengeance (233).—Antiquarian researches into the origin of the *Nibelungen Lied*: Historical coincidences. The oldest Tradition and the oldest Poem of Modern Europe. Who the gifted Singer may have been remains altogether dark: The whole spirit of Chivalry, of Love and heroic Valour, must have lived in him and inspired him: a true old Singer, taught of Nature herself! (265).

GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

Historical literary significance of *Reynard the Fox*. The Troubadour Period in general Literature, to which the Swabian Era in Germany answers. General decay of Poetry: Futile attempts to account for such decay. The world seems to have rhymed itself out; and stern business, not sportfully, but with harsh endeavour, was now to be done. Italy, for a time, a splendid exception in Dante and Petrarch. The change not a fall from a higher spiritual estate to a lower; but rather, a passing from youth into manhood (p. 274).—Literature now became more and more Didactic, consisting of wise Apologues, Fables, Satires, Moralities: This Didactic Spirit reached its acme at the era of the Reformation. Its gradual rise: The *Stricker*, and others. Some account of Hugo von Trimberg: A cheerful, clear-sighted gentle-hearted man, with a quiet, sly humour in him: His *Renner*, a singular old book; his own simple, honest, mildly decided character everywhere visible in it (283).—Boner, and his *Edelstein*, a collection of Fables done into German rhyme from Latin originals: Not so much a Translator as a free Imitator; he tells his story in his own way, and freely appends his own moral. Fable, the earliest and simplest product of Didactic Poetry: The Fourteenth Century an age of Fable in a wider sense: Narratives and Mysteries. A serious warning to Critics! Adventures of *Tyll Eulenspiegel* (294).—In the religious Cloisters also were not wanting men striving with purer enthusiasm after the highest problem of manhood, a life of spiritual Truth: Johann Tauler and Thomas à Kempis. On all hands an aspect of full progress: Robber Barons and Merchant Princes. The spirit of Inquiry, of Invention, conspicuously busy: Gunpowder, Printing, Paper. In Literature the Didactic, especially the Æsopic spirit became abundantly manifest (308).—*Reynard the Fox*, the best of all Apologues; for some centuries a universal household possession, and secular Bible: Antiquarian researches into its origin and history: Not the work of any single author, but a growth and contribution of many generations and countries. A rude, wild Parody of Human Life, full of meaning and high moral

purpose: Its dramatic consistency: Occasional coarseness, and other imperfections. Philological interest of the old Low-German original: The language of our old Saxon Fatherland still curiously like our own. The Age of Apologue, like that of Chivalry and Love-singing, now gone. Where are now our People's-Books? (319).

TAYLOR'S HISTORIC SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY

Upwards of half a century since German Literature began to make its way in England. Hannah More's trumpet-blast against these modern 'Huns and Vandals.' Our knowledge now becoming better, if only because more general. Claims of Mr. Taylor's Book to a respectful examination: Its value and shortcomings (p. 333).—What would be implied by a Complete History of German Poetry: The History of a nation's Poetry the essence of its History, political, economic, scientific, religious. Such a History of the Germans would not be wanting in peculiar human interest: Their poetical Infancy and Boyhood; Enthusiastic Youth; Free Manhood; Spiritual Vastation, and New Birth (341). —Mr. Taylor's *Historic Survey* a mere aggregate of fragmentary Notices, held together by the Bookbinder's packthread: Its incredible misstatements of facts, and general incorrectness and insufficiency. He goes through Germany, scenting out Infidelity with the nose of an ancient Heresy-hunter; though for opposite purposes. Mr. Taylor's whole Philosophy sensual; he recognises nothing that cannot be weighed and measured, eaten and digested: Every fibre of him Philistine (347).—The best Essay in the book, that on Klopstock: Beautiful allegory of *The Two Muses*. Foolish admiration for Kotzebue and his like. His scepticism at least honest and worthy of respect. Literature fast becoming all in all to us, our Church, our Senate, our whole Social Constitution. Its tendency to a general European Commonweal; whereby the wisest in all nations may communicate and coöperate (362).

GOETHE'S PORTRAIT

Goethe, a man well worth looking at. His kingly Head a very palace of Thought. A most royal work appointed to be done there. This Rag-Fair of a world all transfigured, and authentically revealed to be still holy, still divine (p. 371).—Two great men sent among us: Bonaparte, like an all-devouring earthquake, hurling kingdom over kingdom; Goethe, the mild-shining, inaudible Light, making Chaos once more into a Creation. The poorest Life no idle dream, but a solemn, earnest reality (372).

DEATH OF GOETHE

Goethe died at Weimar, 22nd March 1832: His last words, a greeting of the new-awakened Earth; his last movement, to work at his appointed task. A death full of greatness and sacredness: If his course was like the Sun's, so also was his going down. In the death of a good man, Eternity seen looking through Time (p. 374).—A New Era began with Goethe, the ulterior tendencies of which are yet unmanifested. The real Force, which in this world all things must obey, is Insight, Spiritual Vision and Determination. Honour to him who first 'through the impassable paves a road.' Goethe's Works. To how many hearers, languishing, nigh dead, in the airless dungeons of Unbelief, has the assurance of such a man come like tidings of deliverance! The unwearied Workman now rests from his labours; while the fruit of them is growing, and to grow (376).

GOETHE'S WORKS

The greatest epoch in a man's life, not always his death; yet it is always the most noticeable. A transition, out of visible Time into invisible Eternity (p. 385).—The Greatness of Great Men. *Hero-Worship*, the only creed which can never grow obsolete. Man never altogether a clothes-horse; under the clothes is always a body and a soul. Difference between God-creation and Tailor-creation. The Great Man of an age, the most important phenomenon therein. Women, born worshippers of Greatness, either real or hypothetical. Of all rituals, that of Self-worship the most faithfully observed (387).—Greatness of Bonaparte and of Goethe contrasted. Parliamentary woolgathering: The great desideratum, to produce a few members *worth* electing. Modern funeral celebrations, little better than solemn parodies (398).—The summary of each man's works, the Life he led. Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. At no period of the World's History can a gifted man be born when he will not find enough to do: Goethe's peculiar perplexities and victories. His riant, joyful childhood; kind plenty in every sense encircling him: A beautiful Boy; the picture of his early years among our most genuine poetic Idyls. His parents. The Victory at Bergen: His Father's grim defiance and hatred of the French. His Father, with occasional subsidiary tutors, his schoolmaster. Old Frankfort notabilities: The *Judengasse*: Von Reineck: Hofrath Huisgen: Workmen and workshops. Beautiful Gretchen, and Goethe's first experience of natural magic (402).—At Leipzig University: Interview with Gottsched: Religious perplexities; sickness; returns home. The World-Poet, destined by paternal judg-

ment for a Lawyer. To Strasburg. The good Frederike: Is Goethe a bad man, or not a bad man? Jung Stilling's testimony. His 'goodness' and 'badness' not quite easily taken stock of. Intercourse with Herder. The German intellectual Chaos: Goethe's allotted task therein. His first literary productions. Established at Weimar (416).—The inward life of Goethe nobly recorded in the long series of his Writings. *Faust*, the passionate cry of the world's despair, proclaiming, as amid the wreck of Time,—It is ended! *Wilhelm Meister*, an emblem of warm, hearty, sunny human Endeavour; with as yet no recognition of Divinity: In the *Wanderjahre*, melodious Reverence becomes once more triumphant; and deep all-pervading Faith both speaks and sings. A tribute of gratitude from 'Fifteen Englishmen.' Goethe the Uniter and victorious Reconciler of the most distracted age since the Introduction of Christianity. What Strength actually is, and how to try for it. Goethe's noble power of insight: For him, as for Shakspeare, the world lies all translucent, encircled with Wonder: His figurativeness lies in the very centre of his being: The majestic Calmness of both; perfect tolerance for all men and things. Excellencies of Goethe's style. If Shakspeare were the greater nature, he was also less cultivated, and more careless. Goethe's Spiritual History, the ideal emblem of all true men's in these days: Let us mark well the road he fashioned for himself, and in the dim weltering Chaos rejoice to find a paved way. Goethe's political abstinence. His Life and his Writings a possession to the world forever (430).

APPENDIX

No. 1

THE TALE

Rumours and mis-rumours concerning Goethe's Tale of Tales: A genuine English Translation now handed-in for judgment (p. 447).—Phantasmagory not Allegory. A wonderful Emblem of our wonderful and woful Transition Age. Clue to the significance of the several Figures in the Poem. Imagination, in her Works of Art, should play like a sort of music upon us: She herself cannot condition and bargain; she must wait what shall be given her (449).—Metaphysical Subtilty and Audacity, the first flickerings, and audible announcement, of the New Age waiting to be born. How they press poor old Spiritual Tradition into their service; and the havoc they make with him: They give him Wisdom which he cannot use; but have no power to contribute the least

to his wonted Nourishment (454).—The Wisdom, which toilworn Tradition could not and dared not appropriate, is eagerly devoured by newly-awakened Speculative Thought: Glory of comprehending, and of sympathy with Nature. How Logical Acuteness is apt to despise Experimental Philosophy; and how Philosophy gets the best of the bargain. How can poor Sceptical Dexterity ever find the way, across the Time-River of stormy Human Effort, to the unutterable repose and blessedness of Spiritual Affection? The proffered Shadow of Superstition: Noontide Bridge of Speculative Science (455).—Experimental Thought would fain decipher the forms and intimations of the impending Future: Advent and coöperation of Poetic Insight. The 'open secret' of the Coming Change (458).—Poetic Insight or Intuitive Perception, wedded to Practical Endeavour now grown decrepit and garrulous. In the absence of Insight, poor old Practicality is surprised and disconcerted by a visitation of Logic: Death of their foolish little household Pet; which can now only become 'a true companion,' by 'the touch' of Spiritual Affection (460).—Practical Endeavour trudging on, sullen and forlorn, is cunningly robbed by the Shadow of newly-revived Superstition. Old Tradition doggedly insists on his dues; but is not unwilling the Time-River should bear the loss. The individual 'hand' becomes 'invisible' when pledged in the World-Stream of mingled Human Effort (461).—The new Kingly Intellect of the new unborn Time, painfully yearning for a purity and Singleness of Love, which, till it learn the 'fourth' and deepest 'secret,' can never belong to it. Invisible superfluity of Logic, in the Light of noonday intelligence. Pure Spiritual Affection, the New Love which must inspire and sanctify the New Age, as yet only powerful to produce wretchedness and death: At such Birth-time of the World, the greatest misery is the greatest blessing (463).—Strange, gathering omens: Speculative Intelligence, however brilliant and clear-seeing, not the fulfilment of the Blessed Promise. The richest Kingly Intellect sees itself farther from the spirit of Holiness than the lowest, poorest, faithful affection. Voluntary self-sacrifice begins: Blessed death, better than an outcast life (565).—All good influences combine to succour and sustain the One, who by Courage wins the secret of the Age. Spiritual Contagion: Heroic Self-sacrifice the order of the Day (469).—Death, but a passing from Life to Life. The Temple of the Future, and the Old-New Altar within the Temple. Our foolish Age of Transition passes utterly away; and a New Universal Kingdom, of Wisdom, Majesty and Heroic Strength, inspired by the still omnipotence of Holy Love, is ushered into Life. An individual suffices not, but He who combines with many at the proper Hour (472).

No. 2

NOVELLE

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